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Cloudburst in Itanagar triggers landslides

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Mcap of 3 of top-10 valued firms jump ₹1.06L crore

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T20 WC: Afghanistan script history, shock Australia in Super 8s

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سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

Website: salarnews.in www.magzter.com 24 JUNE 2024 | MONDAY | BENGALURU | 17 DHU'L-HIJJAH, 1445 AH Vol 4 | Issue No 153| Pages: 8

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NEET-PG mess stresses out students & parents

Exam was postponed in wake of recent allegations of paper leaks

LATUR, 23 JUNE

Several candidates and parents who arrived at exam centres for NEET-PG scheduled for Sunday unaware that it had been postponed rued allegations of irregularities plaguing exams conducted by the National Testing Agency and asserted it was adding to their already heightened stress and tension.

The Union Health Ministry had on Saturday said it was postponing NEET-PG as a "precautionary measure" in the wake of recent allegations on the integrity of certain competitive exams.

"The postponement of NEET-PG has left me depressed. I was eager to appear since I was preparing for it for months. The students of our country are feeling insecure and are losing faith in the exam system," said student Sakshi Shitole.

A candidate who went to Jaipur for the exam said," Students and doctors have travelled a long way for the exam and come here; they have incurred a lot of expenses. On average, Rs 10,000 was the expenditure. The government must reimburse these expenditures."

Jyoth Chouhan, another candidate said, "National Testing Agency informed at the last moment, 10 hours before that the exam has been postponed. If they had to reschedule, they should have announced that at least a few days ago, Students from Vadodara had exam centres in Nashik and Madhya Pradesh. And then when they reached there, they were informed that the exam had been postponed." he said.

Economic Offences Unit personnel leave with the accused arrested in connection with the alleged irregularities in NEET case, Sunday **PHOTO: PTI**

- "We came to Nanded after covering a distance of 150 kilometres to reach our daughter's NEET-PG exam centre. Only after reaching there, we came to know it had been postponed. This is so stressful for my daughter as well as for us," Sunita Narwade, headmistress of a government aided school in Beed district, said

813 candidates awarded grace marks in NEET-UG appear for retest

As many as 813 of the 1,563 candidates who were earlier awarded grace marks in NEET-UG appeared for a retest on Sunday, officials said. The retest was conducted at seven centres following an order from the Supreme Court. The grace marks were awarded to make up for the loss of time at six centres where the examination started late on 5 May.

NTA on Sunday debarred 17 candidates who had appeared for the exam in Bihar.

—PTI/ANI

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CBI FILES FIR OVER ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

The CBI filed an FIR on Sunday in connection with alleged irregularities in the medical entrance exam NEET-UG held on 5 May.

Giving top priority to the case, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has formed special teams that are en route to Godhra and Patna, where cases of question paper leaks have been registered by police, they said.

"The ministry of education has requested the CBI to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the entire gamut of alleged irregularities, including conspiracy, cheating, impersonation, breach of trust and destruction of evidence by candidates, institutes and middlemen," a CBI spokesperson said.

The allegations of irregularities sparked protests in several cities, litigation and a political slugfest, with Opposition accusing the government of toying with the future of students. Ten aspirants have approached the Supreme Court, seeking directions to the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate to investigate the alleged irregularities in the NEET-UG. Over 23 lakh candidates took the test. *—PTI*

Fresh gunfight in Manipur, none injured

IMPHAL, 23 JUNE

A fresh gunfight broke out between armed men belonging to two warring communities in Manipur, police said. The incident took place after some armed people opened fire towards Thamnapokpi and Lamlai areas in Imphal East district from hilltop positions in adjoining Kangpokpi district around 10.30 pm on Saturday. Local village volunteers returned fire and security forces rushed to the area to bring the situation under control. The gunfight stopped after an hour and no casualties were reported, an officer said. At least 200 people have been killed in ethnic violence *—PTI*

ISRO DATA IS KEY

Make 50 ponds in NE to combat floods: Amit Shah

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

Amit Shah **PHOTO: PTI**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said at least 50 large ponds should be created in the northeast to divert water of the Brahmaputra to help tackle floods and develop agriculture, irrigation and tourism.

Chairing a review meeting on preparedness for flood management during the monsoon, Shah also emphasised on optimum use of satellite imagery provided by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for flood and water management.

He also took stock of the preparations to deal with Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF). Shah said efforts should be made to upgrade the forecast system of water level of rivers for better flood management.

This will help develop agriculture, irrigation and tourism in those areas at a low cost and also help tackle floods, eventually benefiting the local economy, he added.

Recurring flooding of the Brahmaputra is a major issue for Assam and the northeastern region as it claims scores of lives and inundates thousands of hectares of land every year.

Many people were killed, hundreds rendered homeless and communication lines and road networks snapped in Sikkim and Uttarakhand in the last few years following flash floods created due to the glacial lake outburst, which has become another major concern for the government during monsoon.

The Home Minister said the natural drainage system should be an integral part of the designs of road construction to deal with their inundation in case of floods.

Shah said under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India's disaster management is moving forward with a 'zero casualty approach'. He instructed the departments concerned to conduct a detailed study of the recent floods in Sikkim and Manipur and submit a report to the Union home ministry.

During the meeting, IMD, CWC, NDMA and the National Disaster Response Force made detailed presentations. Every year, large swathes of Bihar, Assam and other eastern states are inundated due to a rise in the water level of various rivers due to monsoon rains.

—PTI

Naxalite attack: 2 CoBRA personnel killed in Sukma

SUKMA, 23 JUNE

- The Naxal blast took place around 3pm near Timmapuram village

Two personnel of the Central Reserve Police Force's jungle warfare unit CoBRA were killed after Naxalites blew up a truck with an improvised explosive device (IED) in Chhattisgah's Sukma district on Sunday, police said.

The Naxal blast took place around 3pm near Timmapuram village between Silger and Tekalgudem camps of security forces, over 400km from the state capital Raipur, a senior police official said.

An advance party of the 201st unit of Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA) had launched patrolling from Silger camp under Jagargunda police station limits as a part of its Road Opening Party duty towards Tekalgudem, he said.

The security personnel were on motorcycles while their luggage and rations were being ferried in the ill-fated truck, he said.

"Naxalites triggered an IED blast targeting the truck that claimed the lives of constable Shailendra,29, a resident of Uttar Pradesh, and driver Vishnu R (35) hailing from Kerala," he said. After being alerted about the blast, more forces were rushed to the spot and the bodies were evacuated from the forest, while a search operation continues there, he said. Expressing grief over the incident, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai said in a message on X that the martyrdom of jawans will not go in vain. *—PTI*

Surrogate, adoptive parents to get 180 days maternity off

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

Central government has announced changes in leave policies for mothers who give birth through surrogacy and the parents who adopt these children, for the Central government employees, on Sunday. Central Civil Services (Leave) Rules, 1972 have been amended, which benefits Central employees. In case of surrogacy, the employee can avail 180 days of maternity leave and the commissioning mother, who has less than two living children will also get the same 180 days of leave in case she is a government employee. A Central employee commissioning father, who has less than two living children, can get 15 days of paternity leave.

—Salar News with agencies

Suraj Revanna held for sexual assault on JD(S) worker

BENGALURU, 23 JUNE

JD(S) MLC Suraj Revanna-the brother of former MP Prajwal Revanna who is facing allegations of sexually abusing several women-was arrested on Sunday on charges of "unnatural offences" against him, police sources said. Later, Suraj, 37, has been handed over to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) for probe, Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara said on Sunday. Revanna has been sent to 14-day judicial custody. He was booked on Saturday for allegedly sexually abusing a party worker a few days ago and has been booked under different sections of the IPC, including "unnatural offences."

Suraj Revanna **PHOTO: X/@NABILAJAMAL_**

A 27 year-old man had complained to the police that Suraj, the eldest son of Holenarasipura MLA HD Revanna, sexually abused him at his farmhouse in Ghannikada on 16 June.

Based on the complaint, the Holenarasipura police registered a case against the JD(S) MLC under IPC sections 377, 342 and 506 late on Saturday evening. However, Suraj, the grandson of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda and the nephew of Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy, has categorically refuted the charge. Suraj had also alleged the man had filed a false complaint against him in a bid to extort Rs 5 crore from him.

The Director General of Police, CID (Special Units and Economic Offences), Bengaluru has been asked to arrange to take up further investigation. *—PTI*

>>>More on page 2

PHOTO: PTI

J&K terrorists use Chinese gadget meant for Pak army

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

Encounters with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir have led to the seizure of highly encrypted Chinese telecom gear "Ultra Set", an equipment used by the Pakistani army that has ended up in the hands of terror groups, officials said. This has also raised concerns over undetected infiltrations from across the Line of Control and terrorists potentially residing in the outskirts of cities and villages, they said.

The seizure of the mobile handsets used by foreign terrorists, primarily from Pakistan, indicate that terror groups are receiving training, weapons and ammunition from state actors in Pakistan, said the officials aware of the matter. These specialised handsets, exclusively customised by Chinese companies for the Pakistan army, were seized after a gunfight in the intervening night of 17-18 July last year in the Sindarah top area of Surankote in Jammu region's Poonch district and in 26 April this year after an encounter at the Check Mohalla Nowpora area of Sopore in north Kashmir's Baramulla district.

While four foreign terrorists were killed in the Surankote encounter, two were gunned down in Sopore. The "Ultra Set" handsets, which have also been found in the south of the Pir Panjal region, combine cell-phone capabilities with specialised radio equipment that does not rely on traditional mobile technologies like Global System for Mobile (GSM) or Code-Division Multiple Access (CDMA).

—PTI

YSRCP TALKS TO TRAI

Post polls, 4 news channels go off air in Andhra

AMARAVATI, 23 JUNE

Some news channels have gone off air at several places in Andhra Pradesh following the declaration of the results of the Assembly and Parliamentary elections with an Opposition YSRCP Parliamentarian alleging coercion by the state government leading to them being blocked.

Allegations of channels- TV9, NTV, 10TV and Sakshi TV-being blocked have been levelled against NDA government, comprising TDP, BJP and Janasena.

YSRCP Rajya Sabha member S Niranjan Reddy complained to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) over the alleged blocking of these four vernacular news channels by the government.

In a recent letter to TRAI, Reddy claimed the Andhra Pradesh Cable TV Operators Association took these four channels off air due to alleged coercion by TDP-led government in the state.

YSRCP Rajya Sabha member S Niranjan Reddy has filed a complaint with the TRAI **PHOTO: X**

"I am compelled to bring to your (TRAI) esteemed attention the illegal resolution passed by the Andhra Pradesh Cable TV Operators Association under pressure and directions from the newly formed government to permanently block several news channels," Reddy said.

He alleged TV9, NTV, 10TV and Sakshi TV were blocked 'without any lawful justification or procedural compliance.' Overwhelmed by a negative publicity onslaught over several years allegedly by rivals, YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had established Sakshi newspaper and television channel around 2008 to disseminate a counter narrative.

Meanwhile, a local multi-system operator (cable TV service provider) from the Godavari region confirmed these four channels were blocked. Meanwhile, TDP spokesperson Jyotshna Tirunagari told PTI, "the TDP always believes in the freedom of speech and we give a lot of respect to the press and media. And we always believe in journalism as a very strong pillar for the society and the state."

Moreover, she claimed the party does not categorise channels like 'ours' and 'theirs' as done by former chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy. *—PTI*

- YSRCP Rajya Sabha member S Niranjan Reddy complained to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) over the alleged blocking of these four vernacular news channels by the government.

18 Indian fishermen held for illegal fishing in SL

COLOMBO, 23 JUNE

As many as 18 Indian fishermen were arrested for alleged illegal fishing in the island nation's waters by Sri Lankan Navy and three fishing vessels were seized, on Sunday.

The fishermen were arrested from the North Sea near Delft Islands during a search operation conducted Saturday night.Navy spokesperson Capt Gayan Wickramasuriya said the arrested fishermen would be taken to Kankesanturai fishing harbour for further legal proceedings.

Last week, four Indian fishermen were arrested and their trawler was seized by Sri Lankan Navy for allegedly poaching in the island nation's waters.

Before the latest incident, more than 180 Indian fishermen had been arrested and 25 of their trawlers seized in 2024 for alleged illegal fishing in the Sri Lankan waters.

The numbers are almost 75 per cent of the approximate 240-245 held similarly in 2023.

Most of these incidents happen in Palk Strait, a narrow strip of water separating Tamil Nadu from Sri Lanka's northern tip, a rich fishing ground for fishermen from both countries. *—PTI*

The fishermen would be taken to Kankesanturai fishing harbour **PHOTO: ANI**

PHOTO: PTI

X handle of Canara Bank 'compromised'

BENGALURU, 23 JUNE

State-owned Canara Bank on Sunday said that its account on social media platform X has been "compromised". "Canara Bank would like to inform all concerned that the bank's official X account has been compromised. All concerned teams are investigating the matter and working closely with X to regain access to Canara Bank X handle at the earliest," the bank said in a statement. "We urge users not to post anything on our X page. We will inform immediately when it is restored and working in Canara Bank controls," it said, adding that the inconvenience caused is "regretted". In a similar cyber attack, Axis Bank's X platform was also haked on 17 June. During that time, the hackers posted some stories on Elon Mask's Tesla. Later it was deleted. ***—PTI with agency***

Bodies of missing woman, man found in Tumakuru lake

TUMAKURU, 23 JUNE

The bodies of a 19-year-old woman and a married man who were reported missing were found in Mavathur Lake in Koratagere taluk on Sunday. The deceased Ananya from Lakkayanapalya village in Kolala Hobali and Rangashamanna, 50, were allegedly in a relationship. Rangashamanna, who ran a Xerox shop, had developed a relationship with Ananya, who was a frequent visitor to his shop. Ananya's family objected to their relationship, which eventually led to their disappearance three days ago. Their footwear was found on the bank of the lake and their mobile phones were found in a nearby parked car. Authorities suspect that they ended their lives by jumping into the lake. The case has been registered at Kolala police station, and investigation is underway. ***—Salar News***

Man stabs woman for resisting rape in Davangere

DAVANGERE, 23 JUNE

A man allegedly attempted to rape a married woman and stabbed her with a knife in Gollarhatti in Davangere district on Friday night. The accused was apprehended by the villagers and was handed over to the police while the seriously injured woman was rushed to a hospital. Doctors have reported that she is out of danger.The accused, Katappa, 30, allegedly entered the woman's house and attempted to rape her. When the woman resisted and shouted for help, the accused, fearing the creams would alarm the villagers stabbed her multiple times, including on her neck. Hearing the woman's cries the villagers quickly intervened, apprehended Katappa, and handed him over to the Jagaluru police. A case was registered on Saturday. ***—Salar News***

Govt halts leasing of Sandur forest for mining

Minister cites violation by Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd & failure to pay dues

BENGALURU, 23 JUNE

Karnataka Forest, Ecology and Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre on Sunday said he has ordered his department not to hand over about 401 hectares of forest land in Ballari's Sandur taluk to Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd for mining.

The Minister cited violations by Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd (KIOCL) in the past, failure on its part to pay fine dues to the department, and the need for it to comply with certain conditions. "KIOCL needs to comply with certain conditions, I have ordered that until the conditions are complied with, 401.5761 hectares of forest land should not be handed over to them (KIOCL) for mining," Khandre said.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, "It is Forest department land, it is the property of the state government, without our permission they cannot do mining there." Union Minister for Steel HD Kumaraswamy had recently given his approval to KIOCL to operationalise the Devadari Iron Ore Mine.

Union Cabinet Minister has approved Kudremukh Iron Ore Company to operate the Devadari iron ore mine in Sandur, Karnataka ***PHOTO: FREEPIK***

Also stating that the Devadari project is on Prime Minister's 100-day agenda, Kumaraswamy had instructed officials to work diligently in this regard and said mining should be started as soon as possible. However, there have been concerns from various quarters including the public that about 99,000 trees would be felled if KIOCL is permitted to conduct iron ore mining in the Devadari forest area of Sandur taluk.

Noting that the KIOCL on 16 March, 2018 had submitted an application for mining in Devadari forest area in Sandur, Khandre listing out development so far said, on July 27, 2018 the nodal officer had filed objections to it.

On 18 February, 2020 the

Eshwar Khandre ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

HD Kumaraswamy ***PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA***

Forest department had submitted a letter to the government informing about its stand regarding the mining in the area, based on Forest department officials and the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests' (PCCF) opinion and report that mining will cause severe destruction to the natural forest, also water sources and their flow, hence the mining should not be allowed, he said.

However, on 9 October, 2020, the then government through its Additional Chief Secretary Forest, Ecology and Environment Department had set aside the opinion expressed by the officials, and submitted a proposal to the Central government regarding giving approval for mining - stage one, Khandre said.

On 24 June, 2021, the Government of India with certain conditions had given its approval for stage one, he said, "as per conditions net present value of Rs 32 crore has to be paid, which they (KIOCL) have already paid towards the CAMPA fund, they have paid Rs 147 crore for compensatory afforestation and Rs 1.82 crore for safety zone plantation -- a total of Rs 194 crore has been paid to CAMPA fund at the centre, out of which 90 per cent will be paid to the state." *—PTI*

Abuse claim against my son, a conspiracy: Revanna

BENGALURU, 23 JUNE

JD(S) MLA and former minister HD Revanna on Sunday termed the allegations against his son and MLC Suraj Revanna of sexually abusing a male party worker as a "conspiracy" and said he has faith in God and the judiciary.

Not wanting to react to anything, he said when time comes he will tell everything.

Suraj was arrested in Hassan earlier in the day on charges of "unnatural offences" against him, police sources said.

He was booked on Saturday for allegedly sexually abusing a party worker a few days ago and under different sections of the IPC, including "unnatural offences."

Suraj Revanna ***PHOTO: X***

HD Revanna ***PHOTO: PTI***

While speaking to reporters here, he said, "I won't react to anything. I have faith in God and the judiciary. I won't fear such conspiracies. I know what it is, time will decide."

Suraj, 37, the grandson of former prime minister HD Deve Gowda has categorically refuted the charge. Suraj had also alleged the man had filed a false complaint against him in a bid to extort Rs 5 crore from him.

On Friday, police registered a case of extortion against the JD(S) worker on a complaint by Suraj's close aide Shivakumar.

Suraj's uncle and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy said he didn't have anything to do with it, and law will take its course.

"That issue, why do you ask me? It is not pertaining to me. It is not necessary to react to all those things.

Law will take its own course...What do I have to do with it (case)?" he said. *—PTI*

LITERARY AWARD

Karnataka Lekakara Sangha awarded the Datti Prashasti (Cultural Endowment Award) to four distinguished women in literature, on Sunday ***PHOTO: SALAR***

8 held for murder of Hubballi man

HUBBALLI, 23 JUNE

Hubballi- Dharwad police arrested eight people in connection with the murder of a 30-year-old man, in Lohia Nagar, Hubballi, on Sunday.

The victim, Akash Mathapati, 30, is the son of Sekharavya Mathapati, who is the President of Auto Drivers Association. Sekharavya suspects that his son's murder was committed by his friends.

He has filed complaint against 12 people, identified as Akash's wife Kavya, mother-in-law Sridevi, and father-in-law Mohan Nayak, along with Bharat Nayak, Arjun Magali,

Akash Mathapati ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Sanju Koppad, Rahul Kamble, Vinayaka Talikoti, Manoj, Chamak Mounesh, Mahesh, and Karthik Rajput.

The murder has sparked outrage and highlighted ongoing concerns about law and order.

Niranjan Hiremath, Hubballi- Dharwad corporator and father of Neha Hiremath, who was murdered on 18 April also responded to the incident. He emphasised on the prevalence of illegal cannabis and liquor sales in the city. He lamented the state of law and order, citing the murder of his daughter Neha, Anjali and now Akash as evidence of the system's failure.

Despite visits from the Home Minster and Chief Minister of the State, he added that there has been no significant changes. He vowed to fight for justice and hinted at further actions, including a potential bandh in Hubbali. *—Salar News*

UP man cremates 'wife', finds her alive after 5 days

GORAKHPUR, 23 JUNE

A man who cremated his 40-year-old "wife" five days ago in this Uttar Pradesh district was reunited with her after she was found alive about 600 kilometres away in Jhansi, on Sunday.

Ram Sumer, 60, a resident of Bansgaon in Gorakhpur, lodged a complaint that his wife Phoolmati had gone missing on 15 June. Four days later, on 19 June, a woman's body was found in the Uruva Bazaar area. Sumer identified the body as that of his wife and completed the last rites, according to the police.

However, the case took a mysterious turn after her post-mortem revealed that the woman had been strangled to death, prompting a further probe.

To nab the suspected killer, police traced Phoolmati's mobile phone, which was found active about 600 kilometres away in Jhansi.

Call records showed frequent communication between Phoolmati and a number belonging to one Shubham from Sultanpur.

When questioned, Shubham told the police that Phoolmati was alive and he had brought her to Jhansi.

Superintendent of Police Jitendra Kumar Tomar said the woman was sent back to her husband on Saturday after her statement was recorded. The police have also obtained CCTV camera footage showing a boy moving suspiciously and are re-investigating the case from a new angle." *—PTI*

ISRO's Reusable Launch Vehicle 'Pushpak' during its Landing Experiment, on Sunday ***PHOTO: PTI***

ISRO completes its 3rd landing demo for reusable launch vehicle

BENGALURU, 23 JUNE

- This mission simulated the approach and landing interface and high-speed landing conditions for a vehicle returning from space reaffirming ISRO's expertise

The Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) on Sunday said it has achieved a third consecutive success in the Reusable Launch Vehicle Landing Experiment by demonstrating the autonomous landing capability of the launch vehicle under more challenging conditions.

This mission simulated the approach and landing interface and high-speed landing conditions for a vehicle returning from space, reaffirming ISRO's expertise in acquiring the most critical technologies required for the development of a Reusable Launch Vehicle (RLV), the space agency said.

The third and final test in the series of Landing Experiment (LEX-03) was conducted at 7.10 am at the Aeronautical Test Range (ATR) in Chitradurga.

Following the success of the RLV LEX-01 and LEX-02 missions, ISRO in a release said, RLV LEX-03 re-demonstrated the autonomous landing capability of the RLV under more challenging release conditions (cross range of 500 m against 150 m for LEX-02) and more severe wind conditions.

The winged vehicle, named 'Pushpak', was released from an Indian Air Force Chinook Helicopter at an altitude of 4.5-kilometre "from a release point 4.5-kilometre away from the runway. Pushpak autonomously executed cross-range correction manoeuvres, approached the runway and performed a precise horizontal landing at the runway centreline," it said.

Due to this vehicle's low lift-to-drag ratio aerodynamic configuration, the landing velocity exceeded 320 kmph, compared to 260 kmph for a commercial aircraft and 280 kmph for a typical fighter aircraft, it added.

The RLV-LEX uses multi-sensor fusion including sensors like Inertial sensor, Radar altimeter, Flush air data system, Pseudolite system and NavIC, it said, adding "Notably, the RLV-LEX-03 mission reused the winged body and flight systems as such without any modification, from the LEX-02 mission, demonstrating the robustness of ISRO's capability of design to reuse flight systems for multiple missions." *—PTI*

States should get 60 pc share of GST: Kerala FM

T'PURAM, 23 JUNE

Kerala Finance Minister KN Balagopal has called for a review of the central-state tax sharing ratio of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and said that 60 per cent should go to the states, whereas it is shared equally now.

Currently, the ratio is 50:50 and it should be changed to 40:60 in favour of the states, the minister said in the GST Council meeting held in New Delhi on Saturday, according to a statement issued by his office here on Sunday.

The state Finance Minister said a favourable decision taken with regard to the Integrated Goods and Services Tax (IGST) is expected to be greatly beneficial for Kerala.

Generally, a GSTR-8 return is also required to be filed detailing the GST charges by e-commerce operators while doing business through e-commerce platforms, he said.

It was decided in the meeting to include in the GSTR-8 return the details about the state to which the tax should go, along with the amount of tax, Balagopal said.

Those who sell goods and services from other states in Kerala through e-commerce platforms like Amazon and Flipkart collect IGST from the consumers here, but due to the non-specification of the consumer state in the returns submitted by them, Kerala is not getting the tax share, the minister explained.

Kerala had sought a solution to this issue by listing out facts, which it found out through various studies, and the GST Council has accepted this, he said. *—PTI*

'IT'S A SHAME'

Dalit man barred from Mysuru temple, officials interfere

MYSURU, 23 JUNE

A tense atmosphere prevailed at Kiralu village, Varuna, the home district of Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, after a Dalit man was denied entry into the Shambhu Mahalingeshwar temple on Monday. Following a complaint by the victim, the Tahsildar quickly moved into the action and solved the problem.

The deceased, Naveen, 28 informed the Tahsildar that he was being barred from entering the temple by priests and fellow villagers due to untouchability. Responding to the complaint, Tahsildar Mahesh Kumar, along with Sub Inspector Chetan and other officials, visited the village. They spoke to the village

- People from the Dalit community voiced their disapproval since the incident happened in the Chief Minister's district

leaders, stressing the illegality and immorality of practising discriminating individuals.

The officials convinced the villagers to permit Naveen to enter the temple. Naveen, in the presence of authorities, was finally able to worship at the temple.

Kumar also said, no cases have been filed so far. To prevent such incidents in the future, Kumar held a meeting at the temple premises. "It is a shame that in this day and age, such a practice still exists," said a resident. People from the Dalit community voiced their disapproval since the incident happened in the Chief Minister's district and the jurisdiction of the district in-charge minister HD Mahadevappa known for his stance against unethical practices.

Gram Panchayat member Shambhu Lingappa told **Salar News** that all the people of the village live harmoniously without any discrimination of caste and creed. He said, "The man insisted on going near the sanctum, which is not accessible to anyone." He thanked to the tehsildar and other officials who sorted the problem. *—Salar News*

Naveen, in the presence of authorities, was finally able to worship at the temple in Kiralu village, Varuna, on Sunday ***PHOTO: SALAR***

Man held in Guj for threatening R'than MLA online

AHMEDABAD, 23 JUNE

Police have arrested a man in Gujarat's Ahmedabad city after he allegedly posted a message on social media wherein he threatened to kill Rajasthan MLA Ravindra Singh Bhati, officials said on Sunday. Sleuths of the Ahmedabad crime branch arrested Kishanlal Jat, a resident of Balotra district in Rajasthan, near the railway station here on Saturday, the police said. The police also recovered from his possession a pistol and nine cartridges which he had procured from Madhya Pradesh with an intention to target the legislator, they said. The accused had allegedly purchased the pistol and 10 cartridges from Madhya Pradesh as part of his plan to kill the MLA and even tested the weapon by firing a round, it said.—*PTI*

BJP youth wing leader shot dead in Indore

INDORE, 23 JUNE

A BJP youth wing leader was shot dead by two motorcycle-borne persons in Indore in Madhya Pradesh in the early hours of Sunday, a police official said. Monu Kalyane,35, vice president of the city unit of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, was gunned down in front of a shop near Chimanbaag square on Jail Road at around 2am, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Ram Snehi Mishra told PTI. "Kalyane and two others were pasting posters at the site when two men came on a motorcycle and asked for his phone number. One of the motorcycle borne persons then fired at Kalyane's chest," he said.—*PTI*

KSU, MSF activists wave black flag at Kerala CM

KOZHIKODE, 23 JUNE

The activists of KSU and MSF on Saturday waved black flag at Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan here, protesting against the alleged shortage of plus-one (Class 11) seats in schools across the northern Kerala region of Malabar. Kerala Students' Union (KSU) and the Muslim Students' Federation (MSF), the students wing of the Congress and the Indian Union Muslim League respectively waved black flags at Vijayan when he reached here to take part in a Kerala NGO Union event. Nadakkavu police said 12 activists were taken into custody. The Opposition parties in Kerala are protesting against the apathy of the state government in resolving the issues related to the alleged shortage of plus-one seats in schools of northern Kerala. The Left government has been facing flak over the issue after a girl student in Parappanangadi in Malappuram district died by suicide on 11 June allegedly over anxiety about whether she would get a seat. —*PTI*

Odisha Cong expels 5 over ink attack on state unit chief

BHUBANESWAR, 23 JUNE

Congress on Sunday expelled five of its leaders in Odisha, including the party's state unit general secretary, for six years for their alleged involvement in an incident in which ink was thrown at OPCC president Sarat Pattanayak. Two masked people had on Friday thrown ink at the Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee chief at its state headquarters here. OPCC General Secretary Prakash Mishra, Odisha Pradesh Mahila Congress general secretary Shriyasmita Panda, the party's student wing National Students' Union of India Secretary Sandip Routray, youth Congress State Secretary Amresh Parida and NSUI State Secretary Aryan Sasmal were expelled for six years, a party leader said. Two unidentified people had entered Pattanayak's chambers on 21 June morning and splashed blue ink on his clothes, before fleeing from the spot. —*PTI*

Centre faces Oppn's wrath on NEET exam postponement

Oppn wants PM to apologise to students for 'ruining' edu system

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

Congress on Sunday hit out at the Modi government over the bureaucratic reshuffle in the National Testing Agency after alleged irregularities in NEET-UG, saying the buck stops at the doorstep of the top echelons of the regime.

Centre on Saturday that it has decided to postpone the NEET-PG entrance examination, scheduled to be held on 23 June, as a "precautionary measure" in the wake of recent allegations on the integrity of certain competitive exams.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge alleged that the National Testing Agency (NTA) was projected to be an autonomous body, but in reality was made to serve the "devious interests" of the BJP/RSS.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying it was yet "another unfortunate example that the education system has been ruined".

On X, Gandhi said, "Now NEET-PG is also postponed. This is another unfortunate example of the education system that has been ruined under the rule of Narendra Modi."

Reacting to the postponement of exams, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin said the cancellation of NEET-PG examination and the UGC-NET were not one-off events "but the final nails in the coffin of an incompetent and broken system of centralised selection."

Mallikarjun Kharge, MK Stalin

PHOTOS: PTI/ANI

Stalin, whose party the DMK is opposed to NEET on grounds of social justice among others, called for joint efforts to ensure making school education the base for careers.

All should join hands, "most importantly, for reinstalling hope and faith in the minds of our students and their families," the ruling DMK chief added.

The cancellation of NEET-PG and UGC-NET, has thrown thousands of our doctors into "deep despair." "Let us not forget the fact that these happenings are not one-off events but the final nails in the coffin of an incompetent and broken system of centralised selection," he said in a post on X. Attacking the Centre AIMIM President Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday claimed that youth of the country deserve an apology from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and "justice" from the government. He said that "exam warrior" Modi waged a war on future of the youth.

Meanwhile, students in Rajkot, in Gujarat, held a protest against the re-examination of the NEET-UG examination on Sunday. —*PTI*

> **Under BJP's rule, the entire education system has been handed over to the mafia and the corrupt**
>
> -Priyanka Gandhi, Congress leader

TWO STUDENTS SKIP NEET-UG RETEST IN CHANDIGARH

CHANDIGARH, 23 JUNE

An exam centre in Chandigarh where all arrangements had been made, including the deployment of police and invigilators, for two students to take their NEET-UG retest on Sunday shut the gates after neither turned up.

An official at St Joseph's Senior Secondary School in Chandigarh's Sector-44 said the gates were to be closed at 1.30 pm. After neither student turned up for the retest, the authorities shut the gates.

The re-exam was held from 2 pm to 5.20 pm.

The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducted a retest for 1,563 students awarded grace marks in the Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test Undergraduate (NEET-UG) to make up for time loss at six centers. As many as 67 students scored a perfect 720, unprecedented in the NTA's history, with six from a center in Haryana's Faridabad figuring in the list, raising suspicions about irregularities.

The official said necessary arrangements were put in place for the re-exam. Chandigarh Police personnel were also deployed. —*PTI*

ROW TO CAST SHADOW?

1st LS session: Pro-tem speaker will be in spotlight

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

The first session of the 18th Lok Sabha beginning today will see oath-taking by newly elected members followed by election of the Lok Sabha Speaker on 26 June and President Droupadi Murmu's address to joint sitting of both the Houses on 27 June.

The row over appointment of BJP leader and seven-term member Bhartruhari Mahtab as the pro-tem speaker is likely to cast shadow over the session. The move has drawn flak from the Opposition, which alleged that the claim of Congress member K Suresh to the post was overlooked by the government.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju asserted that Mahtab has had seven uninterrupted terms as Lok Sabha member, making him eligible for the post, while Suresh lost elections in 1998 and 2004 which makes his current term as the fourth straight one in the lower house. Earlier, he was elected to the Lok Sabha in 1989, 1991, 1996 and 1999.

The proceedings will begin with members observing a moment of silence on the occasion of the first sitting of the 18th Lok Sabha. This will be followed by Lok Sabha Secretary General Utpal Kumar Singh placing

Bhartruhari Mahtab PHOTO: PTI

on the table of the House the list of the members elected to the lower house.

Mahtab will then call upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Leader of the Lok Sabha, to take oath as member of the House.

The pro-tem speaker will then administer oath to the panel of chairpersons appointed by the President to assist him in carrying out the proceedings of the House till the election of the Speaker on 26 June.

After the panel of chairpeople, the pro-tem speaker will administer the oath/affirmation as Lok Sabha members to the Council of Ministers. The members from states, in alphabetical order, will take oath or make affirmation over the next two days.

The election to the post of Lok Sabha Speaker will take place on Wednesday and the prime minister will introduce his council of ministers to the House soon after.

—*PTI*

POLITICAL SLUGFEST

TN hooch tragedy victims were careless: Kamal Haasan

KALLAKURICHI, 23 JUNE

Actor-politician Kamal Haasan on Sunday said the victims of the hooch tragedy here that has left about 53 people dead were "careless" and "exceeded their limit."

In Tamil Nadu, there is "enough" liquor available; liquor retail outlets of state-run TASMAC outnumber pharmacies, he said.

The Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) founder was talking to reporters after meeting the survivors of the tragedy at a hospital here. "I cannot say I have no sympathies for these victims. But these victims will have to understand they have exceeded their limit, and they have been careless. They have to take care of their health," he said.

Kamal Haasan PHOTO: PTI

"It has to be occasional drinking, social drinking, if at all," he added.

Meanwhile, BJP on Sunday attacked the INDIA bloc on the hooch tragedy saying it hopes the alliance leaders who have not spoken on the issue will at least show repentance by gathering near the Mahatma Gandhi statue in the Parliament complex and observing a moment of silence for the lives lost.

Addressing a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, the party's National Spokesperson Sambit Patra also slammed Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin and asked him to clarify if he was "complicit" in the incident which took place in the state's Kallakurichi district. It seems they are silent on this issue as it does not serve their politics, the BJP leader charged. TTV Dhinakaran, Amma Makkal Munnettra Kazagam (AMMK) General Secretary, termed the Kallakurichi Hooch tragedy as the "failure of DMK government" and demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation inquiry into the matter. —*PTI/ANI*

Mayawati declares nephew as 'successor', revokes decision

LUCKNOW, 23 JUNE

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) President on Sunday declared nephew Akash Anand her successor and made him the party's national coordinator, reversing her own previous decision.

In the middle of the Lok Sabha elections on 7 May, she had termed Akash Anand immature and relieved him of the party post.

After a national level meeting at the BSP state office here on Sunday, the party in a statement said it was handing Akash Anand his former responsibilities back.

"BSP's National President Mayawati has once again given Akash Anand a chance to work in the party with full maturity. He will continue to hold all his posts in the party as before.

"That is, he will remain Mayawati's only successor along with being the party's national coordinator," the statement read.

Mayawati with her brother Anand Kumar and nephew Akash PHOTO: PTI

Mayawati, a former Uttar Pradesh chief minister, said she is hopeful her nephew will emerge as a "mature" leader.

"I am hopeful about him (Akash Anand) that now he will definitely emerge as a fully mature leader at every level in the interest of his party and movement. The people of the party will also now encourage him by giving him more respect and honour than before. So that now he can live up to all my expectations in the future," she said in a statement.

The BSP Chief had announced Akash Anand as her "successor" in December last year. She revoked her decision after the third phase of Lok Sabha elections.

—*PTI*

No Devaswom portfolio for Kelu; Kerala's ex-min rejects row

T'PURAM, 23 JUNE

CPI(M) central committee member and former Kerala Minister K Radhakrishnan on Sunday justified the Left Democratic Front's (LDF) decision not to give the Devaswom portfolio, which had been handled by him, to party MLA OR Kelu.

Kelu will replace Radhakrishnan and take oath as a minister in the Pinarayi Vijayan Cabinet on Sunday evening at a special ceremony to be held at the Raj Bhavan here.

Radhakrishnan had resigned as Minister for Welfare of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Parliamentary Affairs and Devaswom after being elected to the Lok Sabha from the Alathur constituency.

Meanwhile, other political parties have criticised the Left government for not reportedly handing over the Devaswom portfolio to Kelu. He said newcomers should become capable of handling the portfolios assigned to them. —*PTI*

India probably needs to go back to ballots: Dipankar

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

Amid concerns raised by Opposition parties over EVMs, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya said the country may probably have to go back to ballots.

He also raised concerns over alleged "saffronisation" of education and stock market "scam". Highlighting his concerns around the conduct of the 4 general elections and the Electronic Voting Machines he said the Opposition had sought 100 per cent VVPAT counting in the elections, but it was turned down by Supreme Court. Asked if ballots may bring back the era of booth capturing, he said that it is called "booth" capturing and not "ballot" capturing. —*PTI*

Kejri moves SC against HC's stay on bail order

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has moved the Supreme Court against the Delhi High Court's interim stay on a trial court's order granting him bail in a money-laundering case linked to the alleged excise scam.

The High Court on Friday paused the release of the embattled chief minister after the trial court granted him bail on 20 June. Kejriwal who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on 21 March, could have walked out of Tihar Jail on Friday had the High Court not granted the interim relief to the federal anti-money laundering agency. —*PTI*

Arvind Kejriwal PHOTO: PTI

YSRCP govt allotted 42 acres for offices in 26 dists, says min

AMARAVATI, 23 JUNE

Andhra Pradesh Information Technology and Electronics Minister Nara Lokesh on Sunday alleged that the former YSRCP government led by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had allocated 42 acres of land in 26 districts for building party offices.

The IT minister alleged that these land parcels were allocated at a nominal cost of Rs 1,000 lease for 33 years.

"You (Jagan) allocated 42 acres of land in 26 districts for YSRCP (offices) at a meagre cost of Rs 1,000 lease for 33 years," Lokesh said in a post on social media platform X. He also posted more than a dozen pictures of the alleged YSRCP offices under construction in various parts of the state.

This development comes soon after it became public knowledge that a palatial mansion was allegedly built at a cost of Rs 500-crore in Rushikonda, Visakhapatnam for Jagan Reddy, and that an under-construction YSRCP central party office in Tadepalli was recently demolished. According to Lokesh, the 42 acres of land, said to be worth about Rs 600 crore could have easily funded land at the rate of one cent each for 4,200 poor people.

Nara Lokesh PHOTO: ANI

According to the ruling party, the market value of land in these locations and the estimated expenditure on buildings could total up to Rs 2,000 crore. —*PTI*

DELHI WATER WOES

Haryana shut barrage gates: Atishi

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

Delhi is not getting its share of water as Haryana has shut all the gates of the Hathnikund barrage, Water Minister Atishi alleged on Sunday and asserted she will continue her indefinite hunger strike over the issue.

The closure of the gates of the barrage on the Yamuna River, she said, has led to the water shortage in the national capital.

Her hunger strike seeking release of its share of water for Delhi, which is under the grip of a severe shortage amid a searing heat wave, entered its third day on Sunday.

AAP has said doctors advised Atishi to end her fast.

The minister claimed the Haryana government asked how it would release water for Delhi when it did not have adequate supply.

Atishi PHOTO: PTI

"I request the Haryana government with folded hands to open the gates of the Hathnikund barrage. Release the water of the people of Delhi. Delhites should get the water they are entitled to. Until the Haryana government gives the water they (people of Delhi) are entitled to, until the gates of the Hathnikund barrage are opened, this hunger strike will continue," she added.

Meanwhile, Delhi Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena assured an AAP delegation that met him here on Sunday over the water crisis in the city that he will try to resolve the issue.

The delegation noted that Delhi's population increased from 1.1 crore in 1994 to three crore now while the amount of water it has been receiving remained the same and stressed for urgent action over the matter, it said. The L-G assured the delegation of his commitment to resolving the issue and making every effort to ensure Delhi receives its fair share of water from Haryana, it said.

—*PTI*

Axis My India chief calls exit polls 'lossmaking venture'

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

Exit polls is a loss-making business and the only profit a pollster earns is visibility, said Axis My India chief Pradeep Gupta.

Gupta was considered to be the poster boy of exit polls till 4 June, when the Lok Sabha poll results dealt a hammer blow to the reputation of pollsters after their predictions proved to be wide off the mark.

"Exit polls are a loss-making venture because no media house will pay as much money as that invested on the ground ... the only profit that we make in exit polls is that we get visibility," he said. Gupta, became the centre of a controversy when the Opposition alleged that he predicted a clean sweep for BJP to manipulate the stock market. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Body of terrorist recovered in J&K anti-infiltration op

SRINAGAR, 23 JUNE

Security forces on Sunday recovered body of a terrorist killed in an anti-infiltration operation along the Line of Control in Uri sector of Jammu and Kashmir. "One terrorist has been killed in the ongoing anti-infiltration Operation that was launched on 22 June in the Uri Sector; Operations are continuing," Srinagar-based Chinar Corps said in a post on X. The security forces had launched an operation in Gohallan area of Uri sector on Saturday after noticing suspicious movement of two men near the LoC. Sources had said two terrorists were believed to have been killed. However, only body of one terrorist has been recovered so far. *—PTI*

Student held for links with Bangla terror outfit

KOLKATA, 23 JUNE

The Special Task Force (STF) of West Bengal Police has arrested a college student and detained five others from Panagarh area in Paschim Bardhaman district for their alleged links with a Bangladesh-based terror outfit, a senior officer said on Sunday. The youth, a second-year Computer Science student, was picked up from his Panagarh residence late on Saturday evening for his alleged links with banned Islamist organisation Shahadat-e al Hiqma of Bangladesh, he said. Based on inputs provided by him during his interrogation, STF sleuths nabbed five more people from Nababghat area in the same district, the officer said. The STF has seized the student's laptop and a few documents, including a diary, the officer said. Shahadat-e al Hiqma is a banned Islamist terrorist organisation in Bangladesh. *—PTI*

Speeding SUV of NCP MLA's nephew runs over biker

PUNE, 23 JUNE

A tragic road accident on the Pune Nashik Highway near Kalamb village in Pune's Manchar killed a 19-year-old boy. According to the official, nephew of the NCP MLA from Khed, Dilip Mohite Patil, has been arrested in connection with the accident, as it was his vehicle that collided with the victim's bike. According to a senior police official of the Manchar Police Station, the accident took place at around 9pm on Saturday when 34-year-old Mayur Sahebrao Mohite, the nephew of the NCP MLA, was driving his car on the highway. In an attempt to overtake another vehicle, Mohite's car collided with a bike coming from the opposite direction. Investigation has been initiated. *—ANI*

BSF foils cattle smuggling bid across WB border

KOLKATA, 23 JUNE

Border Security Force (BSF) personnel on Sunday foiled a bid by some Bangladeshis to smuggle cattle across the international border in West Bengal, a statement said. Jawans of the 146th battalion at Madhubana border outpost in Berhampore sector noticed suspicious movement of 5-6 persons who were trying to cross the unfenced stretch of the international border into India along with two bovine animals early on Sunday. A similar incident occurred a day back when jawans of the 70th battalion at Lodhia border outpost in Malda spotted the movement of 14-15 Bangladeshis carrying spears and swords. As the smugglers crossed the border and entered India, the jawans fired a stun grenade to disperse them. However, the intruders attacked the jawans with sharp weapons. *—PTI*

Cloudburst in Itanagar triggers landslides

Flood-like situation was witnessed in several stretches

ITANAGAR/ GUWAHATI, 23 JUNE

A cloudburst on Sunday morning triggered several landslides and a flood-like situation in Itanagar, officials said.

Though Arunachal Pradesh has been witnessing heavy rains over the last few weeks, the situation improved in the past two days. Also, there was no forecast for rain on Sunday, they said.

Following the cloudburst, which happened around 10.30 am, landslides were reported from various parts of Itanagar and its adjoining areas, while a flood-like situation was witnessed in several stretches of the NH-415, an official of the Disaster Management Department said.

Many vehicles were stranded on the highway, the lifeline for the people of the state capital, he said. The district administration asked people not to venture into rivers and landslide-prone areas. People were advised to move to safer places in view of the heavy rains, officials said. The district administration has set up seven designated places as relief camps, they said.

Flood situation remains grim in Assam

The flood situation in Assam continued to remain grim on Sunday with over 1.17 lakh people still reeling under the deluge across 10 districts of the state, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

The flood waters have inundated 968 villages in 27 revenue circles in these districts, he said in a post on X.

The authorities are presently running 134 relief camps and 94 relief distribution centres, where a total of 17,661 people are taking shelter currently, he added.

Sarma also said that the Kushiyara river is at present flowing above the danger mark at Karimganj in the Barak Valley.

On Saturday, the flood situation had improved marginally as the number of affected people decreased, though two more deaths were reported, according to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA).

Cropland of 3,995.33 hectares was still under flood waters, while 2,20,546 animals, including 47,795 poultry, remained affected, it added.

Damage to various infrastructures like houses, cattle sheds, roads, bridges and embankments, were reported from across the state, the ASDMA said. *—PTI*

Many vehicles were stranded on the highway PHOTO: PTI

IMD ISSUES RED ALERT IN 3 KERALA DISTRICTS

T'PURAM, 23 JUNE

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Sunday issued a red alert in Kozhikode, Wayanad and Kannur Districts of Kerala and an orange alert for six other districts in the state forecasting heavy rains. Heavy to extremely heavy rainfall is likely to occur from 23 June to 27 June. Thunderstrom and lightning is also likely to occur in isolated parts of Kerala.

A red alert indicates heavy to extremely heavy rain of over 20 cm in 24 hours.

Ernakulam, Idukki, Thrissur, Palakkad, Malappuram and Kasaragod districts have been put on orange alert for Sunday.

IMD has has also issued an orange alert in Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod districts for Monday.

An orange alert means very heavy rain of 11 cm to 20 cm, and a yellow alert means heavy rainfall between 6 cm and 11 cm.

The IMD has also issued yellow alerts in other districts for Sunday and Monday. *—PTI*

RS 50 TO RS 500

Ch'garh: In a first, Naxals print fake currency notes

The security personnel recovered a cache of fake notes in the denominations of Rs 50, Rs 100, Rs 200 and Rs 500 PHOTO: PTI

SUKMA, 23 JUNE

Security forces have for the first time recovered a huge cache of fake currency notes belonging to Naxalites and equipment used to print them in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, a senior police official said on Sunday.

According to the police, Naxalites were allegedly using the fake currency notes in weekly markets of interior areas of Bastar region for a long time and duping innocent tribals.

Naxalites were also trying to destabilise the Indian economy with this move, Sukma Superintendent of Police Kiran G Chavan claimed.

The recovery was made on Saturday evening on a forested hill near Korajguda village of the district when a joint team of security personnel from various forces was out on a search operation, he said, without specifying the exact face value of the fake currency.

"For the first time, fake currency notes belonging to Naxalites have been recovered in the state which has been struggling with the menace for more than three decades," Chavan said terming the seizure as a crucial success in the anti-Naxal operation.

During a search of the site, the security personnel recovered a cache of fake notes in the denominations of Rs 50, Rs 100, Rs 200 and Rs 500, a coloured printing machine, a black and white printer, an inverter machine, 200 bottles of ink, four cartridges of printer machine, nine printer rollers, six wireless sets, its charger and batteries, he said.

Two muzzle loading guns, a huge cache of explosives, other materials and Naxal 'uniforms' were also seized, Chavan said.

"Under pressure and due to shortage of funds, Naxalites have been trying to use fake notes for procurement of various items in the weekly markets of the region's interior pockets and duping local tribal vendors," he said. *—PTI*

DISTRESSING PATTERN

13-yr-old boy sent bomb hoax email to Delhi airport 'just for fun'

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

A 13-year-old boy was apprehended for allegedly sending an email to the Delhi Airport falsely claiming that a bomb had been planted in the Dubai-bound flight, police said on Sunday.

The boy had sent the mail "just for fun" after being influenced by the news of another teenager who made a hoax bomb threat call a few days ago, Deputy Commissioner of Police (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani said.

The incident occurred on Monday when a complaint was registered regarding a bomb threat on a Dubai-bound flight on June 18, DCP said.

"During the investigation, it was revealed that the e-mail ID was deleted just after sending the email. The email was traced at Pithoragarh in Uttranchal," Rangnani said.

PHOTO: PTI

A team was sent, and the boy was apprehended for sending the hoax email, she said.

"The boy told the police team that his parents had given a mobile to him for study purposes through which he sent the email and later deleted his ID. He did not share any information with his parents as he was scared.

He was apprehended and handed over to his parents," she added. *—PTI*

Man held for hoax bomb threat to airline

Chennai, 23 June

A 27-year-old man hailing from Tamil Nadu's Thanjavur district has been arrested for making a hoax bomb threat to a Mumbai-bound Indigo Airlines flight recently, the police said. The arrested person, identified as V Prasanna, was picked by a team of officials from the Cyber Crime Police Station of Central Crime Branch *—PTI*

3rd bridge collapses in Bihar in a week

MOTIHARI, 23 JUNE

An under-construction small bridge collapsed in East Champaran district on Sunday in third such incident in Bihar in less than a week, officials said.

No casualty was reported in the incident that happened in Ghorasahan block in Motihari, they said. The 16-metre-long bridge was being built over a canal by the state's Rural Works Department (RWD) to connect Amwa village to other areas of the block. It was being built at a cost of Rs 1.5 crore, they added. "The exact cause of the incident is not yet known. It is a serious matter and a departmental inquiry has been ordered. Strict action will be taken against those found guilty," Additional Chief Secretary of RWD Dipak Kumar Singh told PTI.

On Saturday, a small bridge collapsed in Siwan district. It was built over a canal, connecting the villages of Daraunda and Maharajganj blocks. Prior to that, on Tuesday, a newly constructed bridge, about 180 metres long, had collapsed in the Araria district. The state has been witness to several mishaps involving bridges, large and small, constructed over rivers and other water bodies. Though such incidents have not resulted in casualties, these have led to questions being raised on the quality of public works. *—PTI*

A portion of the under-construction bridge after it collapsed, in Motihari district of Bihar, on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

COW SLAUGHTER: NSA INVOKED AGAINST 2 IN MP

MORENA, 23 JUNE

The stringent National Security Act (NSA) has been invoked against two persons arrested after the recovery of cow meat from a village in Madhya Pradesh's Morena district, police said on Sunday.

Following a complaint of cow slaughter, the police on Friday night seized beef and cow skin from a house at the Bengali colony in Noorabad village of the district, an official said.

A villager, Anipal Gurjar, complained that he saw some people slaughtering a cow and when he opposed it, he was attacked by them on Friday evening, Sub Divisional Officer of Police Adarsh Shukla said. The police later seized two sacks of bones and beef, besides the cow skin, from the house of the accused, he said. Four people, including two women, were arrested on Friday, the official said, adding a minor was also detained.

After the incident, workers of several right wing organisations staged protests and blocked roads on Saturday.

The official said more than six other people allegedly involved in the case were absconding and search for them was on. *—PTI*

Manipur CM to discuss border security with Assam

IMPHAL, 23 JUNE

Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh is in Guwahati to discuss security issues along the Jiribam-Cachar inter-state boundary with his Assam counterpart Himanta Biswa Sarma, an official said on Sunday.

Following incidents of ethnic violence in Manipur's Jiribam in the first week of June, many people from the state have taken refuge in adjoining Cachar district in southern Assam.

To discuss the security situation along the inter-state boundary, Singh, along with senior minister L Susindro Singh, left for Guwahati on Saturday evening, the official said.

The two CMs are also likely to discuss coordination among police forces to effectively deal with militants active along the inter-state boundary, he said.

N Biren Singh PHOTO: PTI

Sarma had on Saturday asked officials concerned to ensure there is no spillover of Manipur's ethnic violence into Assam and that all humanitarian aid is provided to the people seeking refuge from the neighbouring state.

Tight vigil is being maintained along the Assam-Manipur inter-state boundary and patrolling and area domination is being conducted, a police officer said. *—PTI*

Hoarding collapse: Firm paid Rs 46L to IPS officer's wife, claims BJP leader

MUMBAI, 23 JUNE

BJP leader Kirit Somaiya on Sunday alleged that ad firm director Bhavesh Bhinde had paid Rs 46 lakh as bribe to a company of the wife of then GRP commissioner, who gave permission to install a hoarding which collapsed here last month.

Somaiya in a series of post on X also claimed that Rs 5 crore was paid by the Ego Media Pvt Ltd (where Bhinde was the director) to various railway police and Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials for "two dozen illegal hoardings" in Ghatkopar and Dadar areas of Mumbai.

The former BJP MP said he has written a letter to Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, requesting him to suspend then Government Railway Police Commissioner Quaiser Khalid for "Ghatkopar Hoardings Scam BRIBE". A giant hoarding collapsed in Mumbai's Ghatkopar area on 13 May during gusty winds and unseasonal rains, killing 17 people and injured more than 70 others, according to police. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) had been formed to conduct a probe into the hoarding collapse incident.

Till now, five people have been arrested in connection with the Ghatkopar hoarding tragedy, he said. *—PTI*

Farmers protest as tiger kills cows in Wayanad

WAYANAD, 23 JUNE

Tiger scare gripped a forest fringe village in Kerala's high-range Wayanad district where farmers and local people blocked a busy road on Sunday morning carrying carcasses of cows that had been killed by the big cat.

Despite continuing efforts by the Wildlife Department to cage the animal, the tiger killed two more cows owned by a farmer at Kenichira village in the wee hours.

It had earlier killed two other cows in the hamlet.

Squatting on the busy road, the protesters raised slogans and demanded to ensure protection for their lives and livelihood. They also displayed carcasses of dead cows on a vehicle.

They wanted immediate intervention of the Wildlife Department to tranquilise the tiger and capture it at the earliest. A local woman said they were scared to send their children to school and visit neighbouring houses due to the constant presence of the big cat.

Steps have already been initiated to bring the rapid response team personnel to the area as part of the mission to capture the animal, they said. Forest officials also said Rs 30,000 would be given as an advance of the solatium to the farmers.

The rest of the amount would be handed over to them after completing the post-mortem procedures of the carcasses of the cows, they added. *—PTI*

SHOT DEAD IN KASHMIR

Slain cop couldn't celebrate son's 1st b'day

SRINAGAR, 23 JUNE

Eight months on, his son's dying words, calm and reassuring even as he took his last breath, still reverberate. "I am hit...Please don't panic," DSP Humayun Bhat told his father, retired Jammu and Kashmir Inspector General of Police Ghulam Hasan Bhat, over the phone.

Humayun called his father from Kokernag in south Kashmir after a gunfight with terrorists that eventually claimed the lives of four security personnel.

Today, a month away from his grandson Ashar's first birthday, Ghulam Bhat remembers the son who went too early, memories that come back to hit even stronger when he sees the child who will never know his father.

- Humayun, Col Manpreet Singh, Major Aashish Dhonchak and Sepoy Pardeep Singh received bullet injuries and were severely injured. They later succumbed to the injuries

"When I see Ashar crawling, I remember my son Humayun. I wish Humayun could have lived longer. Next month is Ashar's first birthday. He didn't live long enough to see even that," Ghulam Bhat said.

Despite his profound grief, he said he finds solace in the courage and selflessness displayed by his son who sacrificed his life for the nation.

A joint operation was launched on the intervening night of 12 and 13 September, 2023 to nab the terrorists. Sensing danger, the terrorists fired at the troops in a bid to escape. A fierce gunbattle ensued with heavy exchange of fire from both sides.

Humayun, Col Manpreet Singh, Major Aashish Dhonchak and Sepoy Pardeep Singh received bullet injuries and were severely injured. They later succumbed to the injuries. *—PTI*

Dy SP Humayun Bhat with his son PHOTO: PTI

CATCH OF THE DAY

Fishermen unload fish from their boats upon their return from a sea voyage to catch fish, at Kasimedu fishing harbour, in Chennai, on Sunday
PHOTO: PTI

Putin's weapon deal with N Korea puts West in dilemma

The pact that Vladimir Putin signed with North Korean leader Kim Jong envisions mutual military assistance between Moscow, Pyongyang ***PHOTO: PTI***

Behind the smiles, the balloons and the red-carpet pageantry of President Vladimir Putin's visit to North Korea last week, a strong signal came through: In the spiralling confrontation with the US and its allies over Ukraine, the Russian leader is willing to challenge Western interests like never before.

The pact that he signed with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un envisions mutual military assistance between Moscow and Pyongyang if either is attacked. Putin also announced for the first time that Russia could provide weapons to the isolated country, a move that could destabilise the Korean Peninsula and reverberate far beyond.

He described the potential arms shipments as a response to NATO allies providing Ukraine with longer-range weapons to attack Russia. He bluntly declared that Moscow has nothing to lose and is prepared to go "to the end" to achieve its goals in Ukraine.

Putin's moves added to concerns in Washington and Seoul about what they see as an alliance in which North Korea provides Moscow with badly needed munitions for its war in Ukraine in exchange for economic assistance and technology transfers that would enhance the threat posed by Kim's nuclear weapons and missile programme.

A landmark pact

The new agreement with Pyongyang marked the strongest link between Moscow and Pyongyang since the end of the Cold War.

Kim said it raised bilateral relations to the level of an alliance, while Putin was more cautious, noting the pledge of mutual military assistance mirrored a 1961 treaty between the Soviet Union and North Korea. That agreement was discarded after the Soviet collapse and replaced with a weaker one in 2000 when Putin first visited Pyongyang.

Stephen Sestanovich, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations noted that when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev signed the deal with Pyongyang in 1961, he also tested the world's biggest nuclear bomb, built the Berlin Wall and probably started thinking about moves that led to the Cuban missile crisis in 1962.

Putin insisted Seoul has nothing to worry about, since the new pact only envisions military assistance in case of aggression and should act as a deterrent to prevent a conflict. He strongly warned South Korea against providing lethal weapons to Ukraine, saying it would be a "very big mistake."

"If that happens, then we will also make corresponding decisions that will hardly please the current leadership of South Korea," he said.

Asked whether North Korean troops could fight alongside Russian forces in Ukraine under the pact, Putin said there was no need for that.

Potential weapons for Pyongyang

Last month, Putin warned that Russia could provide long-range weapons to others to hit Western targets in response to NATO allies allowing Ukraine to use its allies' arms to make limited attacks inside Russian territory.

He followed up on that warning Thursday with an explicit threat to provide weapons to North Korea.

"I wouldn't exclude that in view of our agreements with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," Putin said, adding that Moscow could mirror the arguments by NATO allies that it's up to Ukraine to decide how to use Western weapons.

"We can similarly say that we supply something to somebody but have no control over what happens afterward," Putin said. "Let them think about it."

Sue Mi Terry, senior fellow for Korea studies at the Council on Foreign Relations, warned that Moscow could share weapons technologies with Pyongyang to help improve its ballistic missile capabilities, noting there is evidence of this happening already, with Russia possibly providing help to North Korea with its successful satellite launch in November, two months after Kim last met Putin.

While raising the prospect of arms supplies to Pyongyang that would violate UN sanctions, Putin also said Russia would take efforts at the world body to ease the restrictions — an apparent signal that Moscow may try to keep arms supplies to Pyongyang under the radar and maintain a degree of deniability to avoid accusations of breaching the sanctions.

'Going to the end' in a confrontation with the West

By explicitly linking prospective arms shipments to Pyongyang to Western moves on Ukraine, Putin warned Kyiv's allies to back off as he pushes his goals in the war — or face a new round of confrontation.

"They are escalating the situation, apparently expecting that we will get scared at some point, and at the same time, they say that they want to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia on the battlefield," Putin said. "For Russia, it will mean an end to its statehood, an end to the millennium-long history of the Russian state. And a question arises: Why should we be afraid? Isn't it better, then, to go to the end?"

Alexander Gabuev, director of the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Centre in Berlin, said Putin's statement reflected an attempt to discourage the US and its allies from ramping up support for Kyiv as Russia pushes new offensives in several sectors of the front line.

"The situation is becoming increasingly dangerous, and Russia believes that it should quickly rap the West over its knuckles to show that its deeper engagement in the war will have a price," he said in remarks carried by Dozhd, an independent Russian broadcaster.

Treading cautiously with China

Putin's visits to North Korea handed a new challenge to Pyongyang's top ally, China, potentially allowing Kim to hedge his bets and reduce his excessive reliance on Beijing.

China so far has avoided comment on the new pact, but many experts argue that Beijing won't like losing sway over its neighbour.

Ever since Putin invaded Ukraine, Russia has come to increasingly depend on China as the main market for its energy exports and the source of high-tech technologies in the face of Western sanctions. While forging a revamped relationship with Pyongyang, the Kremlin will likely tread cautiously to avoid angering Beijing. *—PTI*

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

SALAR ساڈہ

What does the 3.2M-year-old Lucy fossil reveal?

Technological growth in genetic analysis suggest that Lucy may have been naked, or at least more thinly veiled ***PHOTO: X/@FOSSILHISTORY***

Fifty years ago, scientists discovered a nearly complete fossilised skull and hundreds of pieces of bone of a 3.2-million-year-old female specimen of the genus Australopithecus afarensis, often described as "the mother of us all."

During a celebration following her discovery, she was named "Lucy," after the Beatles song "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds." Though Lucy has solved some evolutionary riddles, her appearance remains an ancestral secret.

Popular renderings dress her in thick, reddish-brown fur, with her face, hands, feet and breasts peeking out of denser thickets. This hairy picture of Lucy, it turns out, might be wrong. Technological advancements in genetic analysis suggest that Lucy may have been naked, or at least much more thinly veiled.

According to the coevolutionary tale of humans and their lice, our immediate ancestors lost most of their body fur 3 to 4 million years ago and did not don clothing until 83,000 to 1,70,000 years ago. That means that for over 2.5 million years, early humans and their ancestors were simply naked.

As a philosopher, I'm interested in how modern culture influences representations of the past. And the way Lucy has been depicted in newspapers, textbooks and museums may reveal more about us than it says about her.

From nudity to shame

The loss of body hair in early humans was likely influenced by a combination of factors, including thermoregulation, delayed physiological development, attracting sexual partners and warding off parasites. Environmental, social and cultural factors may have encouraged the eventual adoption of clothing.

Both areas of research – of when and why hominins shed their body hair and when and why they eventually got dressed – emphasize the sheer size of the brain, which takes years to nurture and requires a disproportionate amount of energy to sustain relative to other parts of the body.

Because human babies require a long period of care before they can survive on their own, evolutionary interdisciplinary researchers have theorized that early humans adopted the strategy of pair bonding – a man and a woman partnering after forming a strong affinity for one another. By working together, the two can more easily manage years of parental care.

Pair bonding, however, comes with risks.

Because humans are social and live in large groups, they are bound to be tempted to break the pact of monogamy, which would make it harder to raise children.

Some mechanism was needed to secure the social-sexual pact. That mechanism was likely shame.

Boundaries between body and world

Humans, aptly described as "naked apes," are unique for their lack of fur and systematic adoption of clothing. Only by banning nudity did "nakedness" become a reality.

As human civilization developed, measures must have been put in place to enforce the social contract – punitive penalties, laws, social dictates – especially with respect to women.

That's how shame's relationship to human nudity was born. To be naked is to break social norms and regulations. Therefore, you're prone to feeling ashamed.

What counts as naked in one context, however, may not in another.

Bare ankles in Victorian England, for example, excited scandal. Today, bare tops on a French Mediterranean beach are ordinary.

When it comes to nudity, art doesn't necessarily imitate life.

In his critique of the European oil painting tradition, art critic John Berger distinguishes between nakedness – "being oneself" without clothes – and "the nude," an art form that transforms the naked body of a woman into a pleasurable spectacle for men.

Feminist critics such as Ruth Barcan complicated Berger's distinction between nakedness and the nude, insisting that nakedness is already shaped by idealized representations.

In "Nudity: A Cultural Anatomy," Barcan demonstrates how nakedness is not a neutral state but is laden with meaning and expectations.

She describes "feeling naked" as "the heightened perception of temperature and air movement, the loss of the familiar boundary between body and world, as well as the effects of the actual gaze of others" or "the internalized gaze of an imagined other."

Nakedness can elicit a spectrum of feelings – from eroticism and intimacy to vulnerability, fear and shame. But there is no such thing as nakedness outside of social norms and cultural practices.

Lucy's veils

Regardless of her fur's density, then, Lucy was not naked.

But just as the nude is a kind of dress, Lucy, since her discovery, has been presented in ways that reflect historical assumptions about motherhood and the nuclear family. For example, Lucy is depicted alone with a male companion or with a male companion and children. Her facial expressions are warm and content or protective, reflecting idealized images of motherhood.

The modern quest to visualize our distant ancestors has been critiqued as a sort of "erotic fantasy science," in which scientists attempt to fill in the blanks of the past based on their own assumptions about women, men and their relationships to one another.

In their 2021 article "Visual Depictions of Our Evolutionary Past," an interdisciplinary team of researchers tried a different approach. They detail their own reconstruction of the Lucy fossil, bringing into relief their methods, the relationship between art and science, and decisions made to supplement gaps in scientific knowledge.

The veiled Lucy speaks to the complex relationships among nudity, covering, sex and shame. But it also casts Lucy as a veiled virgin, a figure revered for sexual "purity."

And yet I can't help but imagine Lucy beyond the cloth, a Lucy neither in the sky with diamonds nor frozen in maternal idealization – a Lucy going "Apeshit" over the veils thrown over her, a Lucy who might find herself compelled to wear a Guerrilla Girls mask, if anything at all.

—The Conversation

Kenya anti-tax protests: Gen Z shows the power of digital activism

Nationwide demonstrations have erupted in Kenya over a controversial tax bill. The Finance Bill 2024, initially presented to parliament in May, has sparked discontent with an increase in an array of taxes and levies for Kenyans.

The mass protests, initially organised in the capital city, Nairobi, have spread across the country. Demonstrations have taken place in almost every city and major town. Digital media and activism expert Job Mwaura shares his insights into how the protests were mobilised on online, and then onto the streets.

How are Kenyans using the digital space in this movement?

This is a powerful moment for digital activism. The protests have seen significant participation from young Kenyans who are using digital media to organise and voice their opposition. A great number of those driving the protests are Generation Z (often referred to as Gen Z) – individuals born roughly between the late 1990s and early 2010s and characterised by digital prowess and social consciousness. They have created this organic, grassroots movement which has used platforms, like social media, to mobilise and coordinate efforts quickly.

Through my work I've documented how essential digital media has been in political participation in Kenya in the past decade, particularly among the marginalised communities such as the young people and and women.

In the current protests, we are seeing just how innovative activists can be when using digital media. The digital tools and strategies employed today are taking activism to an entirely new level. They showcase a sophistication and reach that would've been hard to imagine. They have deployed a number of old, and new, strategies. Among the new has been Artifical Intelligence (AI) which has been used to create images, songs and videos that amplify the movement's messages and reach a wider audience.

Hashtags – such as #OccupyParliament and #RejectFinanceBill2024 – trended on social media platforms for several days, further highlighting the power of digital activism in mobilising support and maintaining the momentum of the protests.

And then there has been very successful crowdfunding through digital platforms. This has enabled supporters to send money for transportation, allowing more people to join the protests in Nairobi's central business district.

The mass protests, initially organised in the capital city, Nairobi, have spread across the country ***PHOTO: NMG***

Another has been the use of hacking of government websites, disrupting services and drawing attention to their cause. Personal information, such as the phone numbers of political leaders, were leaked to allow protesters to spam them with SMS and WhatsApp messages. This forced the office of the data protection commissioner to issue a statement warning them to stop.

Activists have also created a website featuring a "wall of shame" that lists politicians who support the Finance Bill. This helped the protestors increase pressure on parliamentarians to potentially change their stance. Some constituents are taking steps to recall their MPs.

What stands out for you?

That these protests are organic and that young people are playing a pivotal role. They have long felt dejected and neglected by the government. This widespread sense of disenfranchisement among them was a ticking time bomb, and it has finally exploded into fervent activism. Unlike previous protests, these demonstrations emerged spontaneously from the grassroots. This shift underscores a significant transition in Kenyan politics. We are witnessing a shift from ethnic-based mobilisation to issue-based activism. People aren't coming together based on their tribe. They are uniting to fight for specific issues that affect their daily lives, such as economic policies, government accountability and social justice.

This new form of activism reflects a growing political maturity among Kenyans, who are prioritising shared concerns over ethnic divisions. It sets a new precedent for addressing social and political issues in the country.

What has also stood out is how digital activism has driven nationwide physical protests. Young people have moved off their screens and onto the streets, forcing leaders to listen and even make amendments to the finance bill before it was passed. This shows how online efforts can translate into real-world changes. It demonstrates the power and effectiveness of digital activism in shaping political discourse and policy.

Digital activism provides a powerful platform for diverse voices to be heard, catalysing change. It's enabled fast mobilisation of support, bridged gaps between diverse groups, and it has brought attention to pressing issues in real-time.

For many years, digital media activism has been labelled as "slacktivism," a term that refers to minimal effort activities like liking, sharing, or commenting online that are perceived as having little real-world impact. However, these recent events show that political leaders can succumb to online pressure. They demonstrate that even small changes initiated online can lead to substantial outcomes.

Are there any drawbacks in this using the digital space for activism?

Digital media is vulnerable to government censorship and interference.

During recent protests in Kenya, there were suspected signs of the internet being slowed down, resulting in increased buffering, lags in downloading files, and disruptions to services on certain Apps. Despite these challenges, the impact of digital activism cannot be understated. It has revolutionised how people mobilise, communicate, and advocate for change.

—The Conversation

PHOTO: PTI

1 killed, 7 missing in China landslide

CHANGSHA, 23 JUNE

One person was killed and seven others remain missing as of noon after a landslide in a county in central China's Hunan Province on Sunday, according to the local publicity department. The landslide occurred in Douxi Village, Xinhuang Dong Autonomous County of Huaihua City, at around 4 am on Sunday. Four houses collapsed in the landslide. All other people at the site have been relocated to safe areas, and rescue work is underway. Rainstorms hit many parts of Hunan from Saturday to Sunday morning, according to the local meteorological authority. The province issued warnings for rainstorms and flooding on Sunday, predicting that storms will hit northern and central parts of the province in the coming week.

—Courtesy, Xinhua

Manchester airport faces disruption after power cut

MANCHESTER, 23 JUNE

Passengers have been told to stay away from Manchester Airport after a "major" power cut disrupted a significant number of flights. The warning for those travelling through Terminals 1 and 2 comes after the outage hit in the early hours. Large queues of people have formed inside the airport, where a number of flights have been cancelled, with further disruption expected through the day and some arriving flights diverted to other airports. Passengers flying through Terminal 3 should come to the airport as normal, but could face delays, an airport Spokesman said. The flights of those already at the airport would be prioritised as efforts to "work through that backlog" continued, a spokesman said.

—BBC News

One killed in shooting outside Kentucky nightclub

KENTUCKY, 23 JUNE

One person was killed and seven others were injured in a shooting outside a nightclub in Louisville, Kentucky, on Saturday (local time), CNN reported, citing police. First responders found two people injured with gunshot wounds when they reached the spot outside H20 Lounge at 12.47 am, according to the Louisville Police Metro Department's statement. Later, one of the victims, a man, was pronounced dead. The police said the second person was taken to hospital with critical, life-threatening injuries. Later, medical staff reported that another six victims, all adults, reached area hospitals for treatment after the shooting. The police did not mention any information about the suspect.

—ANI

Karachi residents storm power distributor's centre

KARACHI, 23 JUNE

Enraged over prolonged load-shedding, residents stormed the power distributor's customer care centre on Abul Hassan Isphani Road in Pakistan's Karachi on Saturday, forcing the employees to flee from the spot, Pakistan-based ARY News reported. The protest turned violent as protesters shouted slogans against the power distributor K-Electric, and pelted stones at the customer care center, shattering windows. Angry residents took to the streets due to the worsening power crisis in Karachi, with people calling for an end to frequent load-shedding. The protesters blocked both sides of the road, resulting in a massive traffic jam. After the protest, the K-Electric employees fled from the office, leaving the protesters to express their anger. On Friday, people had held protests in various city areas ***—ANI***

Thousands hold anti-govt protests in Israel

Protestors demands return of hostages held in Gaza

TEL AVIV, 23 JUNE

Tens of thousands of people held anti-government protests in several parts of Israel on Saturday night, calling for new elections and the return of hostages held in Gaza, The Times of Israel reported.

On Tel Aviv's Kaplan Street, David Grossman, one of Israel's best-known authors, urged the people of Israel to fill the streets with demonstrations and fight for their country in a poem he read to protesters.

He read, "There's someone and something to fight for. For such a gift, from life, we will nevermore receive... Now's the time to rise, to live. To be a people or not to be. To be people or not to be... All hangs by a thread."

Former Shin Bet chief, Yuval Diskin called Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "the worst and most failed prime minister in the history of the state." Diskin, who served as Shin Bet intelligence agency chief from 2005 to 2011, demanded elections at the earliest possible opportunity.

"For many weeks, I rejected requests to join the protests. Something deep inside me told me that it wasn't time yet, that maybe it wasn't right to change governments during a war, and that unity was the most important thing," The Times of Israel quoted Diskin as saying.

People protest against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government in Tel Aviv, Israel ***PHOTO: PTI***

People staged a protest on King George Street, outside Beit Jabotinsky, home to the ruling Likud party's headquarters. *—ANI*

Israeli strikes kill 42 in Gaza

Deir Al-Balah, 23 JUNE

At least 42 people have been killed in Israeli attacks on districts of Gaza City in the north of the Palestinian enclave. The Israeli military released a brief statement saying: "A short while ago, IDF fighter jets struck two Hamas military infrastructure sites in the area of Gaza City." *—Courtesy, Dawn*

IRAN-BACKED FIGHTERS OFFER TO JOIN HEZBOLLAH

BEIRUT, 23 JUNE

Thousands of fighters from Iran-backed groups in the Middle East are ready to come to Lebanon to join with the militant Hezbollah group in its battle with Israel if the simmering conflict escalates into a full-blown war, officials with Iran-backed factions and analysts say.

Almost daily exchanges of fire have occurred along Lebanon's frontier with northern Israel since fighters from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip staged a bloody assault on southern Israel in early October that set off a war in Gaza. The situation to the north worsened this month after an Israeli airstrike killed a senior Hezbollah military commander in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah retaliated by firing hundreds of rockets into northern Israel. Israel have threatened a military offensive in Lebanon if there is no negotiated end to push Hezbollah away. *—AP*

The drone attack happened around dawn off the coast of the rebel-held port city of Hodeida ***PHOTO: X@GROKNEWS27***

Aerial drone by Houthi rebels hits ship in Red Sea

DUBAI, 23 JUNE

An aerial drone likely launched by Yemen's Houthi rebels struck and damaged a vessel in the Red Sea on Sunday, officials said, the latest attack by the group targeting the vital maritime corridor.

The attack comes as the US has sent the USS Dwight D. Eisenhower back home after an eight-month deployment that saw it lead the American response to the Houthi assaults. Those attacks have seen shipping drastically drop through the route crucial to Asian, Middle East and European markets in a campaign the Houthis say will continue as long as the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip rages on.

The drone attack happened around dawn off the coast of the rebel-held port city of Hodeida, the British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said. It said the vessel sustained damage but its mariners on board "were reported safe." It did not elaborate on the extent of the damage, but said an investigation was ongoing.

The private security firm Ambrey identified the ship involved as a Liberia-flagged container ship bound for Qingdao, China.

The Houthis did not immediately claim the attack. However, it can take the rebels hours or even days to acknowledge their assaults.

—AP

Ukraine sends over 30 drones into Russia after Kharkiv bombing

KYIV, 23 JUNE

Russian authorities said more than 30 drones were shot down over the country's western regions overnight into Sunday, just hours after a Russian bomb attack on Ukraine's second largest city of Kharkiv killed three people and left dozens in hospitals.

One of the four aerial bombs hit a five-story residential building on Saturday afternoon, officials said. Regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said 41 people were still being treated for injuries.

In a video address following the attack, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged Ukraine's partners to bolster its air defences.

"Modern air defence systems for Ukraine — such as Patriots, accelerated training of our pilots for F-16s, and most importantly, sufficient range for our weapons — are truly necessary," he said.

Two people were wounded by falling debris when two Russian missiles were shot down over the Kyiv region overnight, Ukraine's air force commander Mykola Oleschuk said.

In Russia, air defence forces shot down 33 Ukrainian drones over the country's western Bryansk, Smolensk, Lipetsk and Tula regions, the Russian Ministry of Defence said. No casualties or damage were reported.

Regional Gov. Vadym Filashkin of Ukraine's partly occupied Donetsk region said that Russian attacks on Saturday killed two people and wounded four. *—AP*

Sunak's party member accused of betting on poll date

LONDON, 23 JUNE

PHOTO: PTI

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak is on Sunday dealing with yet another senior party official being involved in placing bets on the date of the general election before 4 July was confirmed

The British Indian leader, who has said he was "incredibly angry" on learning about the allegations that emerged earlier this month, now finds the Conservative Party's chief data officer also being investigated by the Gambling Commission for allegedly betting on the timing of the election before the date had been announced. Following the revelations first reported in 'The Sunday Times', Nick Mason is said to have taken a leave of absence but denies wrongdoing.

It comes as a fresh blow for the Sunak-led Tories, already trailing far behind the Opposition Labour Party in all pre-election opinion polls, after his director of campaigns, Tony Lee, and his Tory MP candidate wife, Laura Saunders, were named earlier in the election date betting investigations.

It followed reports of Sunak's close protection officer being arrested by the Metropolitan Police on suspicion of misconduct over placing an election date bet and Sunak's parliamentary aide, Tory MP candidate Craig Williams, also under investigation. *—AP*

PAKISTAN TURMOIL

ECP defends decision to deny SIC reserved seats

ISLAMABAD, 23 JUNE

As the Supreme Court resumes hearing on Monday the Sunni Ittehad Council's (SIC) challenge to the Peshawar High Court's 14 March verdict, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Saturday justified its decision to deny the party reserved seats for women and non-Muslims.

In a concise statement furnished before the apex court through senior counsel Sikandar Bashir Mohmand, the ECP argued that the SIC did not meet the criteria and is therefore not eligible for reserved seats for women and non-Muslims on account of not being a political party within the meaning of articles 51(6)(d), 56(6)(e) and 106(3)(c) of the Constitution, as well as the election programme's requirement to furnish a list of priority

Th ECP argued that SIC is not eligible for reserved seats for women and non-Muslims ***PHOTO: DAWN.TODAY***

(Form 66) in a timely manner for the reserved seats.

The ECP also pointed out that Article 3 of the SIC constitution limits the party's membership to adult Muslims only, imposing certain restrictions that violate Articles 17, 20 and 25 of the constitution. Based on this alone, the commission argued that the SIC is not entitled to any reserved seats, particularly those for women and non-Muslims.

In its statement, the ECP explained that the SIC also failed to meet additional criteria, specifically that at least one of its candidates should have contested and been elected on a general seat under the common election symbol of the concerned political party. The Commission argued, the PHC verdict denying reserved seats for women and non-Muslims to the SIC was correct. *—Courtesy, Dawn*

27 SUSPECTS ARRESTED FOR MOB LYNCHING

SWAT, 23 JUNE

Pakistan police have 27 people for alleged involvement in the lynching of a tourist in the picturesque town of Swat for allegedly desecrating the Quran, media reports said here on Sunday.

Muhammad Ismail, a 40-year-old resident of Sialkot in Punjab province, was gunned down by an enraged mob which dragged him through the town and later hanged him in full public view in Madyan tehsil of Swat district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province on Thursday.

The mob had also set the Madyan police station ablaze. Five police personnel and 11 locals were injured in the incident.

Those arrested were shifted to an undisclosed location. *—PTI*

CEC should resign, says Pak's PTI over 'poll rigging'

ISLAMABAD, 23 JUNE

Jailed former Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan's party on Sunday reiterated its demand for Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja's immediate resignation for failing to hold "free and fair" elections and protested against the "injustices" being committed against the party, according to media reports.

Leaders of 71-year-old Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party, along with other National Assembly members, led a protest rally from the Parliament to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on the Constitution Avenue here, The Express Tribune newspaper reported. Led by Leader of Opposition and party leader Omar Ayub, the protesters demanded the resignation of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Raja .

The controversial 8 February general elections in Pakistan were marred with massive rigging allegations. *—PTI*

Lanka hails UK's decision on LTTE

Colombo, 23 June

Sri Lankan Foreign Minister Ali Sabry has hailed the decision of the UK government to continue to maintain the LTTE under the proscribed list, saying that the move will thwart every plan of the former armed group to revive itself in the island nation. The decision has thwarted the group's plans to revive them in Sri Lanka, Sabry said. *—PTI*

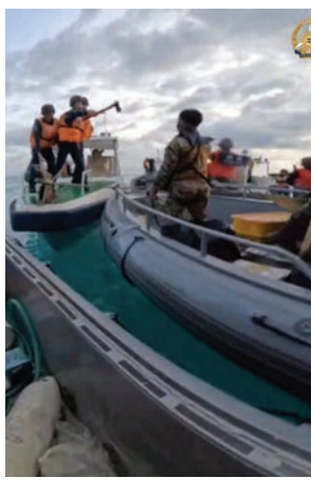
Philippines says it won't back down after clash with Chinese Coast Guard

MANILA, 23 JUNE

Philippines President said on Sunday that his country would not yield to "any foreign power" after Chinese forces injured Filipino navy personnel and damaged at least two military boats with machetes, axes and hammers in a clash in the disputed South China Sea, but added the Philippines would never instigate a war.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. flew with his top generals and defence chief to the western island province of Palawan, which faces the South China Sea, to meet and award medals to navy personnel who came under assault by the Chinese coast guard Monday as they attempted to deliver food and other supplies to an outpost on the hotly contested Second Thomas Shoal.

Videos and pictures of the chaotic face-off made public by the military showed Chinese coast guard personnel hitting a Philippine navy boat with a wooden bar and seizing a bag while blaring sirens and using blinding strobe lights.



Videos which went viral showed Chinese coast guard hitting a Philippine navy boat ***PHOTO: PTI***

The Chinese government said that its coast guard had to take action after Filipino forces defied warnings not to stray into what China calls its own offshore territory, a claim long rejected by rival claimant governments and international arbitrators. *—AP*

UNDER RADAR

Egypt to prosecute travel agents for Hajj fraud

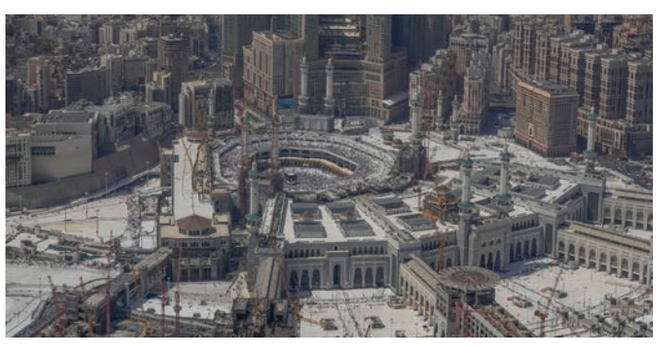
CAIRO, 23 JUNE

The Egyptian Prime Minister, Mostafa Madbouly, has ordered 16 tourism companies to be stripped of their licences and referred their managers to the public prosecutor's office for illegally facilitating pilgrims' travel to Mecca, the cabinet has said.

The order came after various countries reported more than 1,100 deaths, many attributed to high heat, during this year's hajj.

Arab diplomats told AFP earlier this week that Egyptians accounted for 658 deaths, 630 of them unregistered pilgrims.

A statement issued by the Egyptian cabinet said: "The Prime Minister has ordered the licences of these companies to be revoked, their managers to be referred to the public prosecutor, and the imposition of a fine to benefit the families of the pilgrims who died because of them."



Muslim pilgrims circumambulate the Kaaba, the cubic building at the Grand Mosque, during tHajj pilgrimage in Mecca ***PHOTO: PTI***

On Friday, a senior Saudi official defended the Gulf kingdom's management of the pilgrimage.

permits are allocated to countries on a quota system and distributed to individuals via a lottery. Even for those who can obtain a permit, the steep costs spur many to attempt the hajj without one, though pilgrims risk arrest and deportation if caught by Saudi security forces.

The irregular route, which can save pilgrims thousands of dollars, has become increasingly popular since 2019, when Saudi Arabia introduced a general tourism visa which has made it easier to enter the Gulf kingdom.

Courtesy, The Guardian

PHOTO: PIXABAY

Govt to launch 4th tranche of auction for mineral blocks

NEW DELHI , 23 JUNE

The Ministry of Mines is set to launch the 4th tranche of auctions for critical and strategic mineral blocks on Monday in the national capital.According to a statement by the ministry, Union Minister of Coal and Mines G Kishan Reddy and Minister of State for Coal and Mines Satish Chandra Dubey will inaugurate this tranche on Monday at the Scope Convention Centre, CGO Complex, New Delhi.

The critical minerals are essential for both the economic development and mineral security of the country. Their scarcity or dependence on a limited number of nations for extraction and processing can create significant vulnerabilities in supply chains. *—ANI*

HP to produce 9.70L metric tonnes of crops

HAMIRPUR/UNA, 23 JUNE

The Himachal Pradesh agriculture department has fixed a target of producing about 9.70 lakh metric tonnes of Kharif crops this season.The agriculture department has set a target of sowing maize, paddy, ragi, pulses and other food grains on 368 lakh hectares of cultivable land in the Kharif season, an official spokesperson said on Sunday.The maximum target of sowing maize has been set on 272 lakh hectares of land. Similarly, paddy is to be sown on 73 thousand hectares, pulses on 18 thousand hectares and food grains like ragi on 12,700 hectares in the Kharif season, the spokesperson said. Apart from this, a target has been set to cultivate vegetables in 87 thousand hectares and ginger in 3 thousand hectares, but due to lack of timely rain till 19 June, sowing was slow in the state. *—PTI*

SBI plans to open 400 branches in FY25: Chairman

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

As part of the network expansion plan, State Bank of India (SBI) is planning to open 400 branches across the country in the current financial year.The country's biggest lender opened 137 branches last fiscal. Of the total, 59 new rural branches were launched."Somebody asked me if 89 per cent of digital and 98 per cent transactions were happening outside the branch, whether the branch is required anymore. My answer is yes. It is still required because there are newer areas which are emerging," SBI Chairman Dinesh Kumar Khara told PTI in an interview.There are certain services like most of the advisory and wealth services that can be offered only from the branch, he said. *—PTI*

ONGC offers stake in Deen Dayal gas field post 7yrs

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

After spending close to USD 1.2 billion and seven years of little success, state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is seeking partners to rescue the Deen Dayal gas field in the KG basin in Bay of Bengal. ONGC on 12 June sought expression of interest from "global oil and gas companies with requisite technical expertise and financial strength to join as partner (with participative interest) for firming up a viable strategy" for the field, according to the tender document. The field has produced negligible quantities of gas since ONGC in January 2017 acquired Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation's (GSPC) 80 per cent interest in the KG-OSN-2001/3 block off the east coast of India. The block contains Deen Dayal West gas/condensate field discovered by GSPC. *—PTI*

Mcap of 3 of top-10 valued firms jump ₹1.06L crore

Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 217.13 points

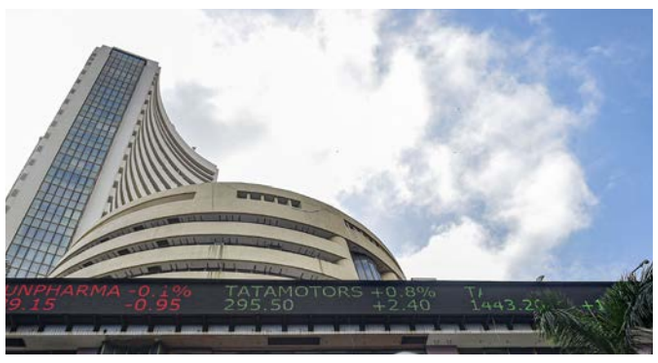
NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

The combined market valuation of three of the top-10 most valued firms jumped Rs 1,06,125.98 crore in holiday-shortened last week, with HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank emerging as the biggest gainers.

Last week, the BSE benchmark Sensex climbed 217.13 points or 0.28 per cent.

While HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and Infosys were the gainers from the top-10 pack, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), Hindustan Unilever and ITC faced a combined erosion to the tune of Rs 1,01,769.1 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank zoomed Rs 52,091.56 crore to Rs 12,67,056.69 crore.



The mcap of Infosys climbed Rs 17,915.43 crore to Rs 6,35,945.80 crore PHOTO: PTI

ICICI Bank added Rs 36,118.99 crore taking its valuation to Rs 8,13,914.89 crore.

The mcap of Infosys climbed Rs 17,915.43 crore to Rs 6,35,945.80 crore.

However, the market valuation of Reliance Industries tumbled Rs 32,271.31 crore to Rs 19,66,686.57 crore.

LIC lost Rs 27,260.74 crore from its mcap which stood at Rs 6,47,616.51 crore.

ITC's valuation eroded by Rs 14,357.43 crore to Rs 5,23,858.91 crore and that of Hindustan Unilever dropped by Rs 8,904.95 crore to Rs 5,73,617.46 crore.

- ICICI Bank added Rs 36,118.99 crore taking its valuation to Rs 8,13,914.89 crore.The mcap of Infosys climbed Rs 17,915.43 crore to Rs 6,35,945.80 crore

The mcap of TCS tanked by Rs 8,321.6 crore to Rs 13,78,111.45 crore and that of Bharti Airtel diminished by Rs 7,261.72 crore to Rs 8,04,262.65 crore.

State Bank of India's valuation declined by Rs 3,391.35 crore to Rs 7,46,454.54 crore.

In the ranking of the most valued firms, Reliance Industries retained the number one place followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Bharti Airtel, State Bank of India, LIC, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever and ITC. *—PTI*

FPI hopes for policy reform, infuses ₹12,170 cr in equities

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

Staging a strong comeback after general election results, foreign investors pumped Rs 12,170 crore in Indian equities so far in June, mainly driven by expectations of continued policy reforms and sustained economic growth.

This came following a net withdrawal of Rs 25,586 crore from equities in May on poll jitters and more than Rs 8,700 crore in April amid concerns over a tweak in India's tax treaty with Mauritius and a sustained rise in US bond yields. With the latest investment, the total outflow now stood at Rs 11,194 crore so far in 2024 (till June 21), data with the depositories showed

Going ahead, Sunil Damania, Chief Investment Officer at MojoPMS, said foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) inflow will remain constrained due to the high valuations currently commanded by the Indian equity market. FPIs had been waiting on the sidelines for the election results. So far in 2024, barring March (Rs 35,000 crore inflow), they have been pulling out from India

FPIs had been waiting on the sidelines for the election results. So far in 2024, barring March inflow, they pulled out from India PHOTO: PTI

"Though the general election results were sort of a surprise and resulted in a weaker than expected mandate, markets celebrated that yet again a stable government is formed and government continuity is maintained," Kislay Upadhyay, smallcase Manager and founder of FidelFolio, said. Further, business sentiment remained buoyant, and policy continuity added confidence to markets.

Damania attributed three primary reasons for this positive inflow. However, these FPI inflows are concentrated in a select few stocks rather than being widespread across the market or sectors. *—PTI*

HOME SUPPLY FALLS BY 13 PC: PROPEQUITY

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

Fresh supply of housing units is estimated to decline 13 per cent during this quarter across nine major cities with builders launching less number of projects because of the general election, according to real estate data analytic firm PropEquity.

PropEquity data shows that new housing supply in April-June is estimated to fall to 97,331 units across nine major cities as against 1,11,657 units in the year-ago period.

Pune and Hyderabad are witnessing fewer launches during this quarter while the new supply in Delhi-NCR has almost doubled. Samir Jasuja, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director of PropEquity, attributed the fall in new supply of housing units to the Lok Sabha election which took place in this quarter.The new supply is 7 per cent lower from the January-March quarter of this calendar year, he added. *—PTI*

BII bullish on Indian EV ecosystem, to invest $300M

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

British International Investment, UK's development finance institution, is betting big on the Indian electric vehicles ecosystem and expects to invest another USD 300 million in the next three years, according to its MD and Head of Technology & Telecoms, Abhinav Sinha.

The company, which has backed Mahindra group's electric vehicles (EV) arm besides other startups like Euler Motors, Turno and Battery Smart, has already invested around USD 300 million in the Indian EV sector and sees further investment opportunities in EV manufacturing, components and financing segments in the country.

"India has quite an evolved auto market... On the EV side, the penetration right now lags the rest of the world... The (overall) penetration of EVs in India is something like 6 per cent and we see it quite easily expand, double and more than double quite quickly," Sinha told PTI in an interview.

He further said, "the leader today is China, but for India to be significantly ahead of where it is today... we think it's a very achievable sort of an objective... So we're quite bullish."

By 2030, he said there will be a "massive level" of EV penetration in public transportation in India and there will be "quite a bit of traction on the passenger (electric) cars, as more and more people adopt it". *—PTI*

FOR FY21 & 22

Centre may repay loans to compensate states for GST loss

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

The central government may be able to repay Rs 2.69 lakh crore loans it had taken to compensate states for GST revenue loss in FY21 and FY22 by November 2025, four months ahead of its scheduled repayment, an official has said.

The full repayment of the market borrowings is expected earlier than the previously calculated timeline of March 2026.

The issue is expected to be taken up for discussion in the next meeting of the GST Council in August, the official added.

The compensation cess was initially brought in for five years to make up the revenue shortfall of states, following the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The full repayment of the market borrowings is expected earlier than the previously calculated timeline of March 2026 PHOTO: PIXABAY

- The issue is expected to be taken up for discussion in the next meeting of the GST Council in August, the official added

The compensation cess expired in June 2022, but the amount collected through the levy is being used to repay the interest and principal of the Rs 2.69 lakh crore that the Centre had borrowed during Covid-19.

At the 53rd GST Council meeting on Saturday, it was learnt that Karnataka had raised the issue of continuation of compensation cess levy, repayment of the loan amount and its way forward.

"It was clarified to the states that the loan amount may be repaid early. Maybe, by November 2025 instead of March 2026. So, how the cess amount would be apportioned beyond November 2025, all this would be discussed in the next Council meeting," the official said. *—PTI*

ANNUAL REPORTS

Adani got ₹9.2 cr salary, lower than his peers

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

India's second richest person Gautam Adani received a total remuneration of Rs 9.26 crore in the fiscal year ended 31 March, 2024, lower than most industry peers as well as his own key executives.

Adani, 61, drew salary from only two out of the 10 companies in his ports-to-energy conglomerate, annual reports of the 10 listed entities of the group showed.

His remuneration for 2023-24 from the group's flagship firm Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) included Rs 2.19 crore salary and perquisites, allowances and other benefits worth Rs 27 lakh. The total remuneration of Rs 2.46 crore was 3 per cent more than the previous financial year, according to AEL's 2023-24 annual report.

Besides, he drew Rs 6.8 crore from Adani Ports and SEZ Ltd (APSEZ).

Adani's salary is lower than heads of almost all large family-owned conglomerates in India.

Gautam Adani drew salary from only two out of the 10 companies in his ports-to-energy conglomerate PHOTO: PTI

While the richest Indian, Mukesh Ambani has been foregoing his entire salary since Covid-19 broke out prior to which he had capped his remuneration at Rs 15 crore, Adani's remuneration is much lower than telecom czar Sunil Bharti Mittal (Rs 16.7 crore in 2022-23), Rajiv Bajaj (Rs 53.7 crore), Pawan Munjal (Rs 80 crore), L&T Chairman S N Subrahmanyan and Infosys CEO Salil S Parekh.

Adani, who is worth USD 106 billion according to the Bloomberg Billionaire Index, has been jostling with Ambani for the spot of the richest person in Asia. He became the richest Asian in 2022 but lost that position after a damning report by US short-seller Hindenburg Research wiped out almost USD 150 billion of market value of his group stock at its lowest point last year.

- Adani, 61, drew salary from only two out of the 10 companies in his ports-to-energy conglomerate, annual reports of the 10 listed entities of the group showed.His remuneration for 2023-24 from the group's flagship firm Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL) included Rs 2.19 crore salary

He regained the top spot on two occasions this year but again ceded the position to Ambani.

Ambani is ranked 12th on the world's richest list with a networth of USD 111 billion. Adani is ranked 14th. *—PTI*

AS NEW MINISTERS JOIN

GST council needs to restructure 3 Group of mins

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

The GST Council will have to reconstitute three Group of Ministers (GoM) under it as new ministers from 11 states joined the body on Saturday.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said that in the 53rd GST Council meeting on Saturday, there were 11 new ministers from Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Odisha, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Telangana and Tripura.

The 52nd GST Council meeting was held on 7 October, 2023.With new ministers joining the council, the reconstitution of three GoMs on analysis of revenue from GST, boosting the real estate sector under GST, and GST system reforms are on the cards.

While the GoM on GST rate rationalisation has already been reconstituted in February, making Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary its convenor, the reconstitution of the other three is yet to be notified.

In the GoM on analysis of revenue from GST, the new finance minister from Odisha has to be inducted.

PHOTO: PTI

The BJP won the assembly polls in Odisha and formed the government earlier this month. The name of the new finance Minister from Haryana has also to be included in the panel.

The GoM on boosting the real estate sector, headed by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, has to be reconstituted as the finance minister from Bihar has changed.The panel on GST on system reforms, under the convenorship of Pawar, has to be reconstituted with five new ministers from Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Chattisgarh, and Odisha. *—PTI*

Goa seeks ₹700 crore for water projects

PANAJI, 23 JUNE

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has sought Rs 700 crore from the Centre for water augumentation projects and Rs 300 crore grant for the decennial exposition of St Francis Xavier's relics scheduled later this year, officials said on Sunday.

Sawant was participating in a pre-budget meeting chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in New Delhi on Saturday and he said these initiatives are essential for Goa's development.

The relics of St Francis Xavier are preserved at the Basilica of Bom Jesus in Old Goa near state capital Panaji. The exposition is scheduled to be held between 21 November, 2024 and 5 January, 2025.

The event, held once in 10 years, is attended by lakhs of people from across the world.

During the meeting in Delhi on Saturday, the chief minister stressed on the need for a grant of Rs 300 crore for the decennial exposition of the relics of St Francis Xavier, the Chief Minister's office said in a statement. Sawant, also demanded Rs 700 crore for water augmentation projects and financial support for the Konkan Railway to strengthen connectivity in the state, it said. *—PTI*

AI will eliminate few jobs but will create more: Delloite

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

AI will replace people with people, contrary to the common narrative, Deloitte's AI Executive Rohit Tandon said, emphasising that the future belongs to AI-human collaboration, not replacement, as he envisions a revolutionary era where technology empowers, rather than replaces, the workforce.

In an interview with PTI, Tandon, Managing Director, AI and Insights Practice Leader, Deloitte LLP, said AI will not snatch jobs, but will simply do away with some of the easier jobs, and create new roles. "AI will, with people, replace people... It's not just AI replacing people. You still need humans in the loop," he said.Tandon said the same kind of fear of job roles getting wiped out existed when IT, technology, and computers came into the scenario. "It's going to be something that we talk about just like the way we talk about it or not talk about it, it just becomes a part of our lives," he said.

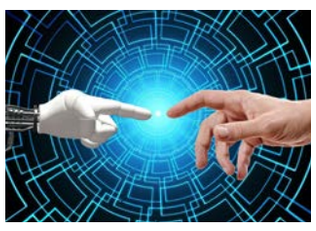


PHOTO: PIXABAY

He said this is not the first time when a new technology has come and threatened job losses.

"We've done this before with automation, call centres, etc. We've automated some of the easier stuff. What it leaves behind is tougher problems for humans to solve.

"It will lead to job changes. AI will be replaced by AI with humans. If you look at the pyramid of jobs, AI will start automating more of the easier jobs that are done," he noted.

People will use AI to supplement their knowledge and their ability to find information and share that back and serve the population, he said. *—PTI*

EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Belgium bounce back with 2-0 Romania victory

Youri Tielemans breathes new life into Belgium's Euro 2024

DORTMUND, 23 JUNE

Youri Tielemans breathed new life into Belgium's Euro 2024 campaign as the Aston Villa midfielder's goal after just 73 seconds inspired a vital 2-0 win against Romania on Saturday. Domenico Tedesco's side would have been on the brink of elimination if they had suffered a second successive Group E defeat. But Tielemans' second-minute strike in Cologne eased fears of yet another major tournament flop from star-studded Belgium. Kevin De Bruyne wrapped up the points in the closing stages to leave all four teams in the group level on three points.

The stage is set for a dramatic final round of fixtures in the battle to reach the last 16.

Belgium's Youri Tielemans celebrates scoring their first goal with Dodi Lukebakio and Amadou Onana PHOTO: X / @EURO2024

Belgium face Ukraine and Romania play Slovakia on 26 June. With 45 rungs separating the two nations in FIFA's rankings, third-placed Belgium's 1-0 loss to Slovakia on Monday was the biggest upset in European Championship history. Romania ranked in 47th place, competed gamely as they chased their shock, but this time Belgium's superior class proved decisive.

"I have the same feeling as against Slovakia: we played well but the difference is that we scored and won today," said Belgium captain De Bruyne. "We made a few mistakes and gave away a few chances, but we can be satisfied with our performance, both offensively and defensively." Having bowed out at the group stage of the 2022 World Cup and lost in the quarter-finals of the last two Euros, Belgium's golden generation have given themselves fresh hope of finally delivering on their vast potential. —*AP*

T20 WC: Afghanistan script history, shock Australia in Super 8s

KINGSTOWN, 23 JUNE

Afghanistan's Gulbadin Naib celebrates after the dismissal of Australia's Glenn Maxwell PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP

The Afghanistan cricket team scripted history in T20 World Cup 2024, as they defeated former champions Australia by 21 runs in a Super 8 match on Saturday. Afghanistan put 148/6 on the board while batting first and managed to bowl out Australia for just 127 in 19.2 overs. It was a contrasting performance from the Afghanistan team, that usually rides on the heroics of its spinners. This time, however, it was the pace bowling unit, led by Gulbadin Naib, that produced the emphatic turnaround in the game, and the cricketing universe.

Afghanistan had faced Australia five times before this encounter in all formats, losing all of them. The T20 World Cup 2024 Super 8 clash turned out to be the first time that Afghanistan managed to beat Australia in an international contest. reducing the deficit to 1-5.

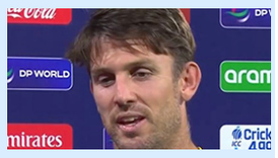
This historic victory will be remembered for a long long time! # Afghan Atalan #T20 World Cup #AFG v AUS # Glorious Nation Victorious Team

Gulbadin finished with four for 20 from his four overs of medium pace to turn the match as Australia suffered their first-ever defeat to the Afghans in a senior international encounter, being dismissed for 127 with four balls left in the match.

"Thanks to dear Allah. We've waited for a long time. Big moment for our nation and our people. I have no words to say but thanks to the fans who have supported us in our career and cricket journey. I learned from the batting innings how to bowl. Thanks to Rashid for trusting me. It's a whole team effort, Rahmanullah, Zadran, and also Naveen for the momentum. Afghanistan 148 for 6 (Gurbaz 60, Ibrahim 51, Cummins 3-28, Zampa 2-28) beat Australia 127 (Maxwell 59, Gulbadin 4-20, Naveen 3-20) by 21 runs. —*AP*

Marsh's warning to India after Afghanistan setback

KINGSTOWN, 23 JUNE



Mitchell Marsh PHOTO: PTI

Following a setback against Afghanistan that left Australia speechless at Arnos Vale Ground, captain Mitchell Marsh has issued a warning to India and his teammates ahead of their final clash in the Super 8 against unbeaten India at the 2024 T20 World Cup. The spirited performance from Afghanistan left Australia in a peculiar situation. **India vs Australia match starts: at 8 pm IST** —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

UEFA increases field-side security at Euro 2024

FRANKFURT, 23 MAY

Security will be increased field-side to stop fans getting to players at the European Championship after the problem peaked when at least six fans tried to get selfie photos with Ronaldo. UEFA said Sunday that "additional safety measures will be deployed" in the 10 stadiums in Germany, though no details were revealed of the updated plan to stop intruders who face criminal prosecution. "Any incursion onto the pitch constitutes a breach of the stadium rules.—*AP*

PHOTO: PTI

Archery WC: Indian recurve mixed team wins bronze

ANTALYA, 23 JUNE

Indian recurve mixed team of Dhiraj Bommadevara and Bhajan Kaur produced an excellent performance to rally past Mexico and clinch a bronze medal in the Archery World Cup Stage 3 here on Sunday. Trailing 0-2 after conceding the opening set, the Indian team produced a flawless round to bring it level and seal a stunning 5-3 (35-38, 40-39, 38-37, 38-38) win over their Mexican opponents Alejandra Valencia and Matias Grande. This was India's third medal from the meet and the archers will be in the hunt for two more medals when Dhiraj and Ankita Bhakat compete in their respective individual semifinals later in the day. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Sha'Carri secures spot for Paris Olympics

PARIS, 23 JUNE

Reigning world champion Sha'Carri Richardson has officially booked her ticket to the Paris 2024 Olympics women's 100m with the fastest time in the world this year at the US Olympic trials. The 24-year-old clinched the victory in 10.71 seconds to qualify for her maiden Olympics. She won the 100m at the trials three years ago but missed the Tokyo Games due to a positive marijuana test. Melissa Jefferson finished second in 10.80 seconds, and Twanisha Terry came in third with a time of 10.89 seconds.—*AP*

Rui claims he has proof of Man City FFP breach

DUBAI, 23 JUNE

The large cloud that hangs above the heads of Manchester City's period of dominance grows even darker as the hacker behind the 'Football Leaks scandal' Rui Pinto has claimed he has handed five hard drives to French and German authorities with millions of documents which will find 'criminal relevancy' against the club.

Manchester City has 115 financial fair play FFP charges

Rui Pinto PHOTO: @RUIPINTO_FL

for failure to provide accurate financial information. These charges include failure to provide accurate details for player and manager payments, failure to comply with UEFA's rules including Financial Fair Play, breaching Premier League's PSR rules, failure to cooperate with Premier League investigations, and are expected to face a hearing for alleged financial irregularities.

The Portuguese national Pinto has been under witness protection since 2020. Despite being found guilty of attempted extortion and unauthorized access to data. —*AP*

Andy Murray PHOTO: X / @ANDYMURRAY

Andy Murray ruled out of Wimbledon

PARIS, 23 JUNE

Former World No. 1 Andy Murray has been ruled out of this year's Wimbledon after an operation on a spinal cyst, said the ATP on Sunday. In a statement on social media platform X, the governing body for men's tennis said, "Andy Murray out of Wimbledon after undergoing surgery. The 37-year-old Murray was aiming to make a farewell appearance at the All England Club, where he is a two-time champion.This also puts two-time gold medallist Murray's participation at the Paris Olympics in doubt. Wimbledon runs from 1-14 July while the tennis competition at the Olympics will begin on 27 July.

Murray managed just five games before a back injury forced him to withdraw from his second-round match against Australia's Jordan Thompson at the Queen's warm-up event in London on Wednesday. —*AP*

Mandhana's graceful 90 leads India to 6-wicket win over SA, ODI series sweep

BENGALURU, 23 JUNE

Smriti Mandhana waltzed to a characteristically elegant 90 to form the crux of India's six-wicket win in the third and final women's ODI against South Africa, marking their 3-0 series clean sweep here on Sunday.

Mandhana, whose innings came off 83 balls (11x4), had efficient support casts in Shafali Verma (25), Priya Punia (28), and Harmanpreet Kaur (42, 48b, 2x4) as India went past the target of 216 without exerting themselves much. The hosts made 220 for four in 40.4 overs after South Africa were restricted to an underwhelming 215 for eight despite skipper Laura Wolvaardt's solid 61 (57b, 7x4).

Though she failed to make a third hundred on the bounce, the knock underlined the way Mandhana dominated this ODI series, scoring 343 runs at an average of 114.33.

The 27-year-old was once again composed in the middle and played some typically graceful shots around the Chinnaswamy stadium.

Indian players celebrate after winning the third women's ODI cricket match and series over South Africa, at M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Sunday PHOTO: PTI

The pitch was smoothened out during the chase and the SA bowling was anything but threatening, giving the Indian vice-captain ample time to pursue her game without an iota of pressure.On view were those trademark shots that make her batting a sight for the sore eyes – swivel pulls, cover drives, straight drives, and those late taps that touch the rope after teasing the third man fielder. India 220 for 4 (Mandhana 90, Harmanpreet 42) beat South Africa 215 for 8 (Wolvaardt 61, Reddy 2-36, Deepti 2-27) by six wickets.—*PTI*

PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP

Big-hitting Windies clash with rampaging SA

NORTH SOUND, 1 JUNE

Hosts West Indies will need their all-round firepower to tame a rampaging South Africa in their must-win final Super Eight clash to seal the semifinal berth at the T20 World Cup here.

After their only loss in six games to England in their opening Super 8 game, WI regrouped to smash co-hosts USA by nine wickets.

For WI, a win will see them through to the last four, while a loss will bring it down to net run-rate, and that too only if the USA beat England in the other group match. South Africa, who have won all their six games so far, are sitting at the top of the table but they too are not yet guaranteed a spot in the semifinal and will need a win to seal the position. A loss will again leave their fate on the other result and NRR.

However, both teams will have the advantage of knowing the exact scenario before they head into the match. West Indies had failed to rotate strike against England but they quickly addressed the issue, producing a dominant show against the USA. **WI vs SA match starts: at 6 am IST.** —*PTI*

Max wins his 3rd Spanish Grand Prix

PARIS, 23 JUNE

Max Verstappen claimed a crucial victory in the Spanish Grand Prix, holding off the challenge of pole-sitter Lando Norris. With this win, Verstappen sealed his 3rd successive Spanish GP win and a 4th overall.

The Dutchman has extended his lead at the top for a fourth championship title. Meanwhile, Lewis Hamilton claimed his maiden podium finish in 2024. He finished behind Norris.

At the start of the race, George Russell went from fourth to first in the first turn, with an audacious move. Crucially, Verstappen also pipped pole-sitter Norris at the start.

The Dutchman would soon overtake Russell on Lap 3, a move that would allow him to manage his pace and tyres at the front.

Ferrari duo Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz finished where they started, coming home in fifth and sixth. Leclerc was less than a second behind Russell at the end.

Home hero Fernando Alonso endured a race to forget, finishing pointless at a disappointing 12th place. Russell was ahead of Norris and Hamilton for most of the race. —*AP*

Max Verstappen has won the past three Spanish Grands Prix PHOTO: X / @MAXVERSTAPPEN1

Mexico beats Jamaica 1-0 in Copa America

HOUSTON, 23 JUNE

Gerardo Arteaga scored from the edge of the penalty area in the 69th minute, and Mexico beat Jamaica 1-0 in its Copa America opener.

El Tri, competing as a guest in South America's championship for the 11th time, dominated the match and scored on their 17th shot.

Joel Latibeaudiere's weak-headed clearance went to Luis Romo, who controlled the ball off a thigh and passed to Arteaga. His left-foot shot beat goalkeeper Jahmali Waite and went inside the far post for his second goal in 25 international appearances.

Michail Antonio appeared to put Jamaica ahead with a short-range header in the 50th minute but the goal was disallowed for offside following a video review.

Mexico captain Edson Álvarez left in the 30th minute following a left hamstring injury and was replaced by

Gerardo Arteaga PHOTO: X/@GERARDOARTEAGA7

Romo.

Venezuela beat Ecuador 2-1 in the other Group B match. Mexico plays Venezuela at Inglewood, California, on Wednesday, while Jamaica faces Ecuador at Las Vegas. The group finishes on June 30, when Mexico plays Ecuador at Glendale, Arizona, and Jamaica faces Venezuela at Austin, Texas. —*AP*

DOPE TEST REFUSAL

NADA suspends Bajrang again

NEW DELHI, 23 JUNE

The National Anti-Doping Agency suspended Bajrang Punia for a second time, three weeks after ADDP had revoked his suspension because NADA had not issued a 'notice of charge' to the wrestler.

NADA had on 23 April suspended the Tokyo Games bronze medallist wrestler for refusing to give his urine sample for the dope test during the selection trials held in Sonepat on 10 March. World Governing body UWW had also suspended him.

Bajrang had appealed against the provisional suspension and NADA's Anti-Disciplinary Doping Panel (ADDP) had revoked it on 31 May till NADA issued the notice of charge.

Swinging to action, NADA on Sunday served the notice to the wrestler.

"This serves as a formal notice that you are being charged with violating Article 2.3 of the National Anti-Doping Rules, 2021 and now you are provisionally suspended," said NADA's communication to Bajrang.

Bajrang Punia PHOTO: PTI

Bajrang has time till July 11 to request a hearing or accept the charge.

The elite wrestler has maintained that he never refused to give samples but only demanded to know NADA's response to his email where he sought an answer as to why expired kits were sent to take his samples in December 2023.

NADA also explained the reason for its action.

"Chaperone/DCO had duly approached you and informed you that you were required to provide a urine sample for dope analysis purposes.

"Even after several requests made by the DCO, you had refused to provide your urine sample on the ground that you would not provide the sample unless NADA replies to your email regarding the issue of expired kits, which were used by the concerned DCO who had come to collect the sample of the athlete for the dope test about two months ago. Following your refusal to submit to sample collection, the DCO of NADA had also explained to you in detail, about its consequences and outcomes under the NADR, 2021.

"Despite all the efforts made by the DCO, you had refused to submit for the sample collection." —*PTI*

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